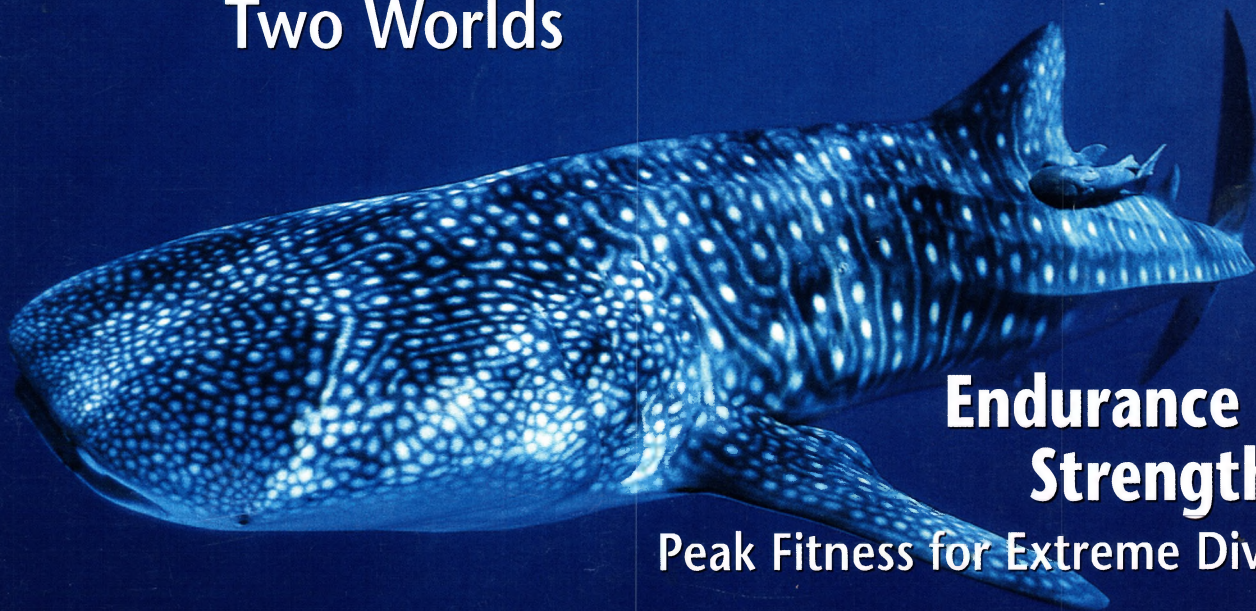


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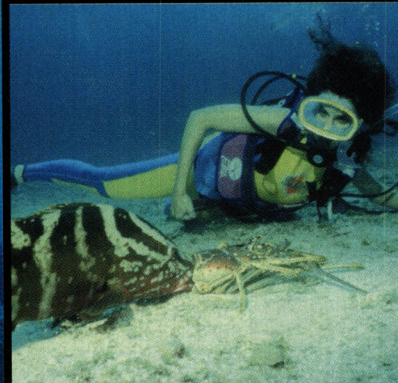
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BARE ADVENTURE IN THE BVI

The British Virgin Islands provide the perfect island-hopping destination for a bareboat adventure. FRED GARTH and family embrace the cruising lifestyle and find the diving to be, well, anything but bare.

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ONE COUNTRY, TWO WORLDS—COSTA RICA

GEORGIANNE BRADLEY & JAY IRELAND explore the many environs of Costa Rica—from the Pacific to the Caribbean and the rainforest in between.

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AT PLAY IN THE EASTERN FIELDS

At the northern end of the Great Barrier reef, STUART & MICHELLE WESTMORLAND find a divers playground. Atop the remains of a volcano's grave is a coral forest full of life.

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BEYOND THE REEF

ELLSWORTH BOYD de-archives Grand Cayman's rarely-touted wrecks, and finds they give the island's reefs some stiff competition.

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FRIENDLY WHALES OF SAN IGNACIO

ERIC HANAUER off-roads it to San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja's Sea of Cortez, where he gets a warm welcome from what might be the world's friendliest Gray Whales.

ABOUT THE COVER:

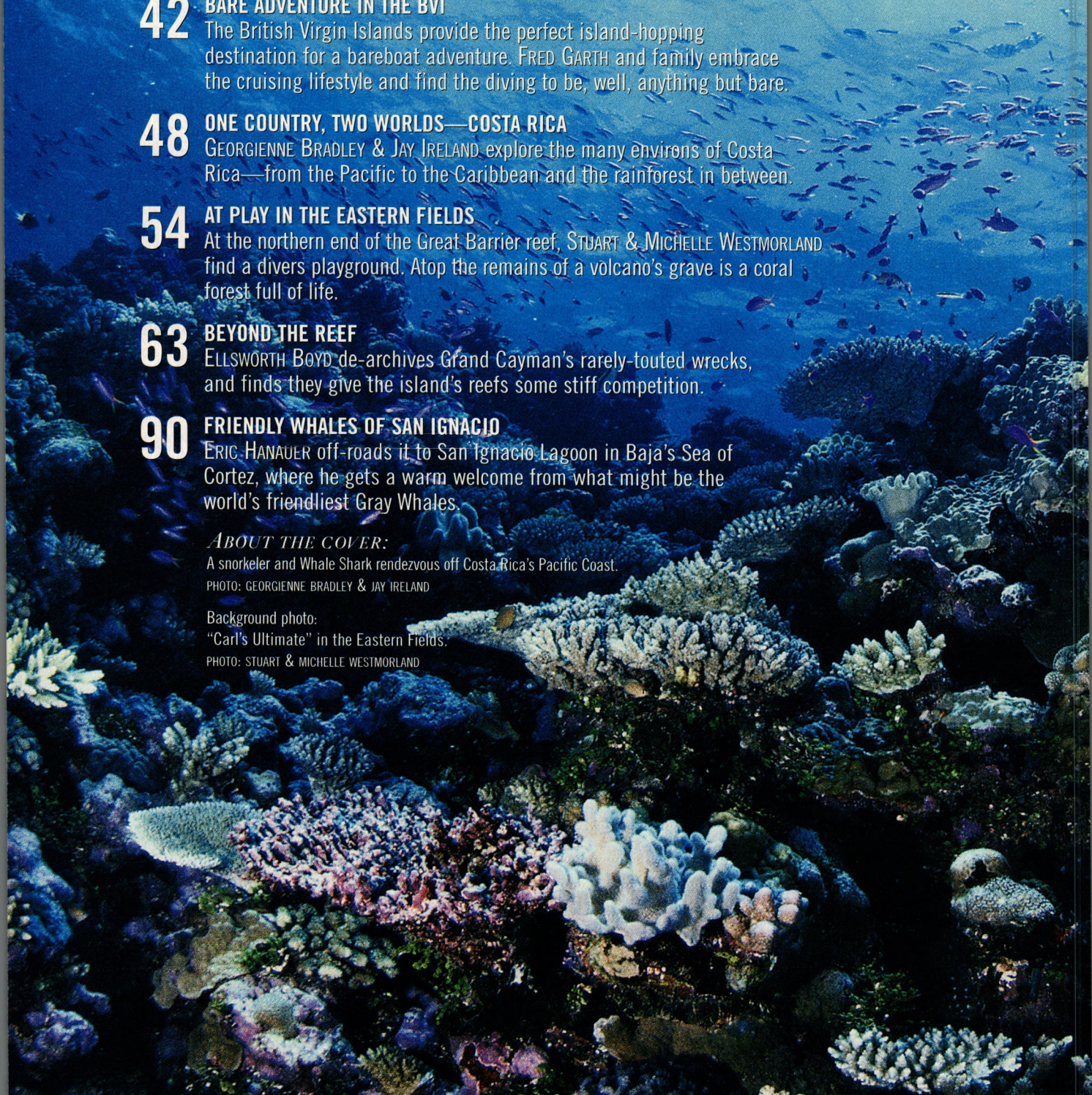
A snorkeler and Whale Shark rendezvous off Costa Rica's Pacific Coast.

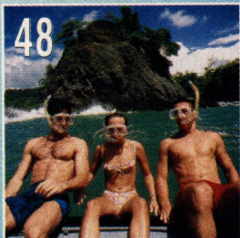
PHOTO: GEORGIANNE BRADLEY & JAY IRELAND

Background photo:

"Carl's Ultimate" in the Eastern Fields.

PHOTO: STUART & MICHELLE WESTMORLAND





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JAY IRELAND IN COSTA RICA Jay located Costa Rica on the map just before accepting a job aboard the live-aboard *Okeanos Aggressor*. Orig-

"The greatest thing about diving in Costa Rica is the element of surprise. You never know what to expect."

nally scheduled to work only two months, Jay willingly extended his tour, not leaving for a full seven years.

"The greatest thing about diving in Costa Rica," says Jay, "is the element of surprise. You never know what to expect."

GEORGIANNE BRADLEY IN



COSTA RICA Georgienne was attending Sackler medschool in Tel Aviv, when her career path took an unexpected turn. Offered an opportunity to spearhead a Cousteau Society fact-finding mission in Central America, she quickly accepted. There, she had her first taste of images standing witness to environmental injustice. Seduced by the combined impact of words and photographs, she stayed in Costa Rica for

four years, where she met Jay Ireland. The duo later returned to the U.S. to launch Bradley Ireland Productions.

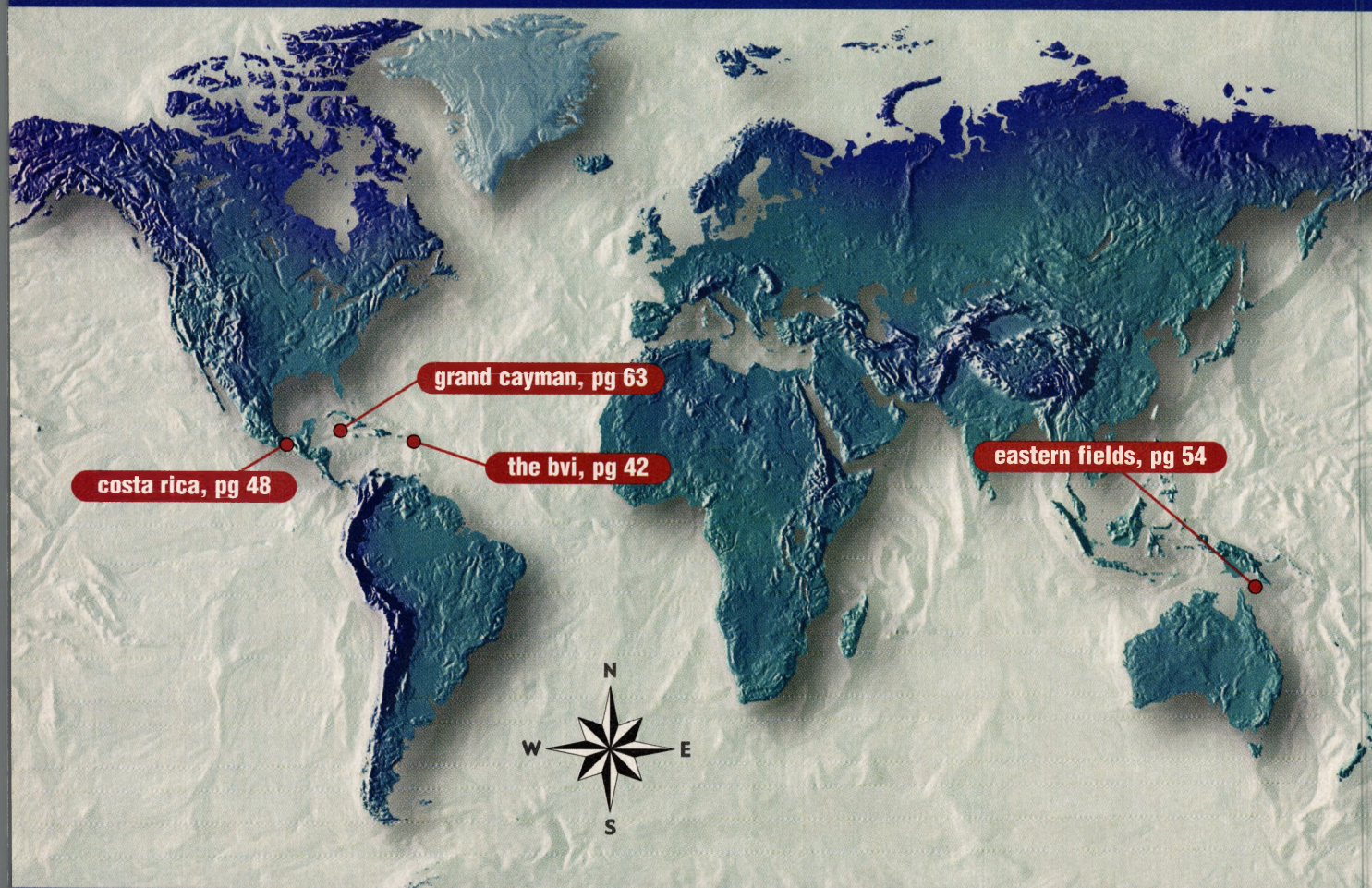
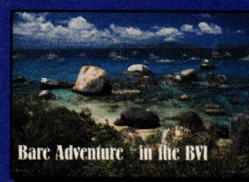
Jay and Georgienne are currently finishing *Diving Costa Rica* for Aqua Quest Publications. They continue to document environmental issues on film.

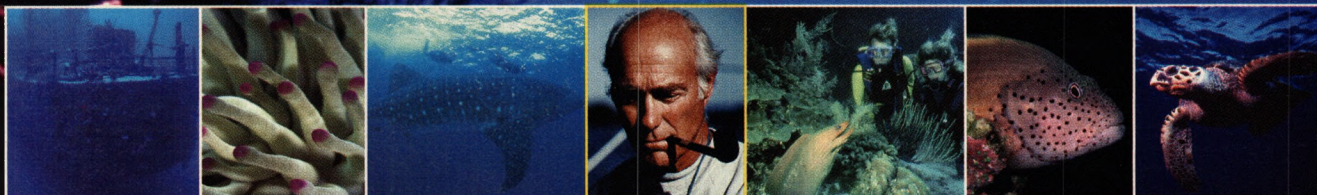
BRET GILLIAM IN BVI Bret's love affair with



the British Virgin Islands began in 1971, when he was hired by a film production company to shoot underwater photography off Virgin Gorda. Upon arriving, he discovered the film had more adult themes than artistic ones. Despite its alphabetically advanced rating, Brett soldiered on "as a professional" and completed the assignment. All told, he spent 18 years in the Virgin Islands, overseeing his own charter fleet of large motor yachts and providing film support services to such features as *The Deep*.

Bret now resides in Maine, traveling constantly on film projects and serving as president and CEO of TDI and SDI. He is determined to never have a job that requires him to wear real shoes.





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While I'm quite certain this change will have major ramifications on the world financial markets and I'm likely to get sucked into some congressional hearings to explain how something like this could happen, I'd like to assure all of our faithful readers that your magazine still holds tightly to one value: Getting wet.

We, that is the broad editorial “we” of diving humanity, all have one thing in common. We are addict-



ed to diving because each time we get in the water there is a chance that our lives will change forever. There is the chance we will see our first dolphin, sea lion or Sperm Whale. There is the

In the Beginning

chance we will capture *the* perfect anemone photo or discover some treasure (be it a gold coin or an old bottle) that will give us a tangible and personal connection to the past. There is a chance we

will experience something completely new. Who can ever be the same after that?

Skin Diver, from its earliest days, has embodied this addiction to discovery. It's a value instilled by the magazine's founders, Jim Auxier and Chuck Blakeslee, 51 years ago. This May, Jim passed away. In a touching tribute on page 21, his business partner and life-long friend pays homage to *Skin Diver's* first editor. It's been said that that Jim and Chuck produced "...a magazine that seemed stained with saltwater and fish scales from their last dives." Real stories from real divers about a sport they lived and loved.

It is a great privilege to carry on that tradition. May *Skin Diver* always be a magazine that inspires divers to get wet. 🐟

DARYL CARSON, EDITOR

The Ocean Understands:

Thursday

... feel the chill of the cold water against your spine. It's dark down here... Where you are it's always night... You've missed it again... It's time to go back... Only fifty-eight minutes left... Most people wouldn't understand... Most people are at home watching T.V.

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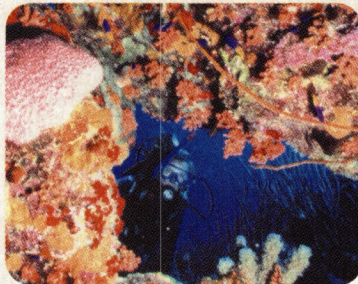
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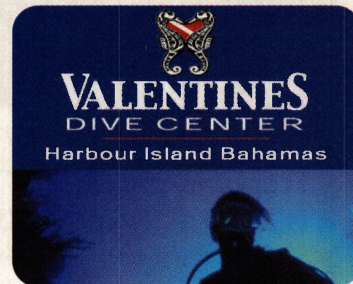


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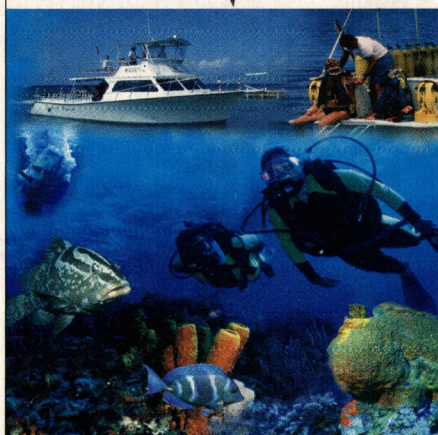
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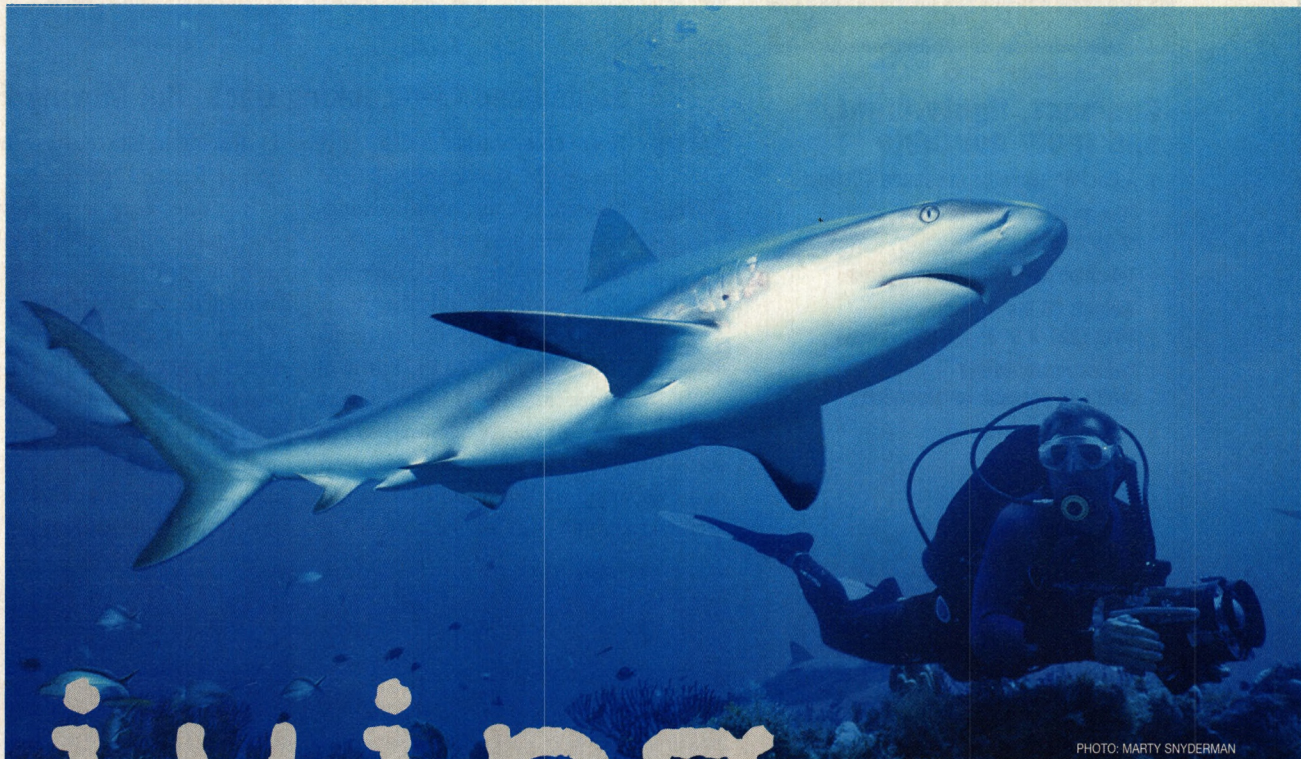


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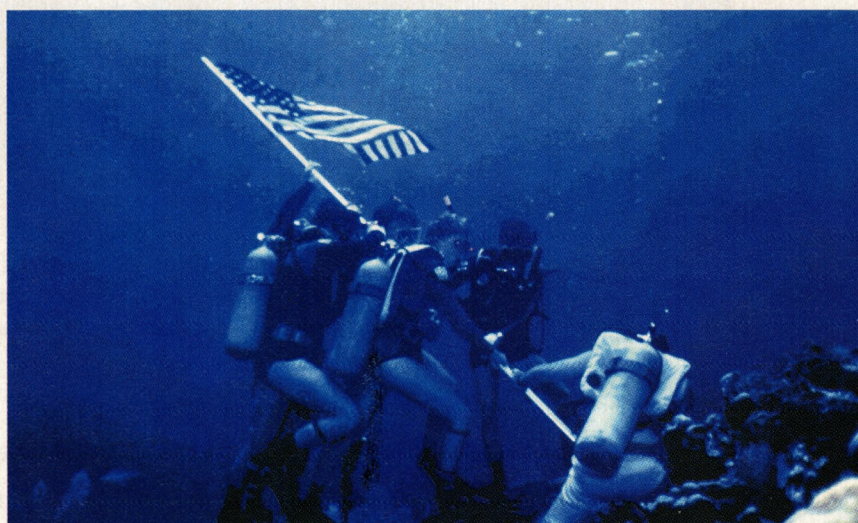
Readers Speak Out

September 11—Looking Back, But Moving Forward

JUST ONE SHORT YEAR AGO, the world we knew changed forever. The terrorist hijackings and bombing of the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon, and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania struck deeply into the fabric of American life. I have always lived in the NYC area, so the scenes of horrific wreckage played over and over again on television on that day seemed jarringly out of sync with the

11, leaving us all paralyzed by a combination of fear and raw anger.

It's one year later now, and even though the plumage of smoke has disappeared and the dead have been mourned, there are still visible scars. There is no question that our economy and the pervasive spirit of optimism that America has always enjoyed have suffered a blow, and the diving community, as most other sectors in America, is still feeling the repercussions. However, divers are independent and intrepid by



landscape in which I had always felt safe.

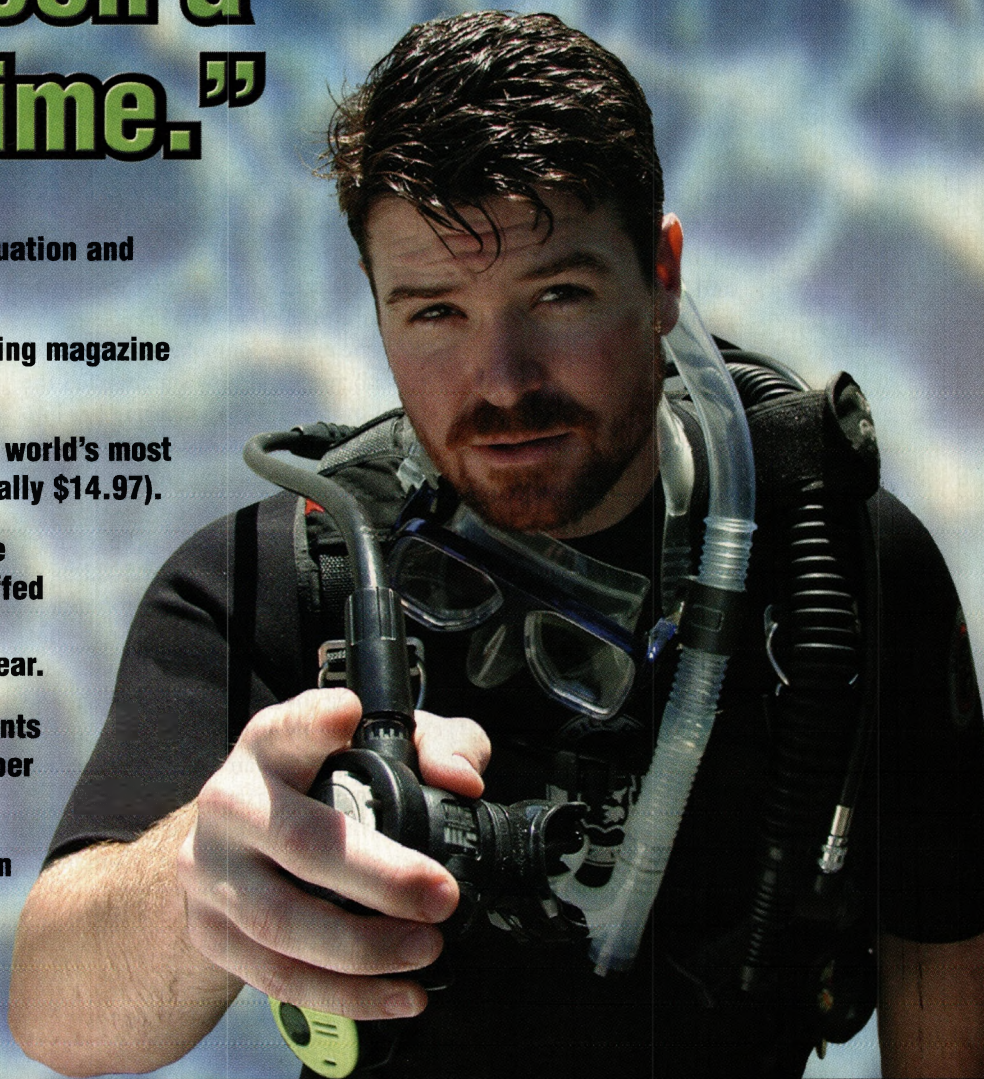
On September 11, I found myself torn by conflicting allegiances. Some of the heroic firemen and police officers who were buried in the rubble of the collapsed twin towers had once been my scuba students, and the realization that these strong, fearless men had succumbed to such a horrible death was unimaginable. My first instinct was to jump into my car and rush to the World Trade Center (WTC) to assist in the rescue. I had cousins and nephews who worked in the Twin Towers as well, and by the time my family was accounted for, the bridges and tunnels into Manhattan were closed down by the National Guard and the skies overhead were streaked with F16 Fighter planes. Although I ultimately lost several loved ones, mine is only one of countless firsthand accounts of the inferno which singed the world consciousness on Sept.

nature, and I still believe that our best response to September 11 is to refuse to surrender our freedom to terrorism.

Many dive businesses are beginning to recoup their initial losses after September 11, and we should do everything we can to speed the process. That means that we must continue to patronize dive stores and dive operations; we must continue to attend dive shows and expos; and we should continue to travel to our favorite dive resorts to savor the beautiful marine environment more than ever. The peacefulness and sense of equilibrium that the sea offers can be an elixir in stressful times like these. So even if the lines are longer at airports and we have less money for recreation, divers who keep traveling and doing what they love will set an example for the rest of the world to follow. —
Hillary Vidars, Ph.D. 🐟

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EDITED BY RYAN ALLEN

BRIMMING WITH PRIDE, Key Largo residents and local dive charter operators witnessed the arrival of the 510-foot-long *Spiegel Grove* on May 14. It would become the largest vessel in the world intentionally sunk as an artificial reef.

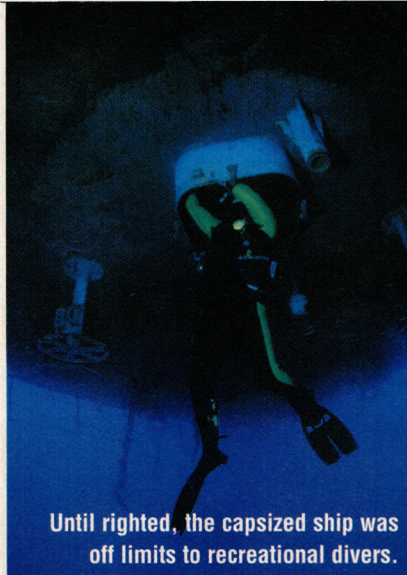
Commissioned in 1956 as an LSD (Landing Ship Dock), her 6,880-ton displacement and nearly two-football-fields length is matched by her multi-deck height and impressive 84-foot beam. Her stern houses a 175-foot well deck designed to be flooded to launch and retrieve amphibious hovercraft.

Since she is also the first ship ever to be sunk within a National Marine Sanctuary, addi-



The *Spiegel Grove* arrives at her future home, Key Largo, on May 14, 2002.

tional site precautions and procedures were met in order that the



Until righted, the capsized ship was off limits to recreational divers.

Spiegel Grove: Major Heavy Metal!

Spiegel Grove would provide an alternative dive site, thus lessening pressure on nearby coral reefs.

As she neared, onlookers marveled at her enormity and how she dwarfed the ocean-going tugs maneuvering her into the approved sinking location two miles North of the famous WW II wreck *Benwood*.

But while making preparations for the sinking, planned flooding of the compartments went too quickly and the *Spiegel Grove* sank prematurely on Friday, May 17, rolling over in the process and coming to rest, stern down, at 130 feet with her air-filled bow floating above the surface.

At the ensuing press conference, Key Largo Chamber of Commerce

Board Member Stephen Frink said, "This is a hiccup or maybe it's a burp...but we're going to overcome it!"

Professional salvage companies were screened and interviewed, with Resolve Marine Group winning the job to roll the ship over. Their expertise, combined with the efforts of numerous volunteers, paid off as the *Spiegel Grove* was properly settled on her starboard side on June 10, at 6:30 PM.

The human task is complete now and nature has already begun her role of transforming a large piece of U.S. Naval history into a haven for marine life. Larval sponges, corals and algae

are already establishing themselves on the wreck, while enormous schools of bait fish swirl over the bridge decks. The *Grove* offers excellent multilevel diving, as she extends several stories off the 130-foot-deep ocean floor. Swept by clear Gulf Stream waters, visibility usually exceeds 100 feet, and beginning divers can find relief from any current in the lee of her enormous hull. Even snorkelers view her mighty structure on a daily basis. Tek divers marvel in the cavernous, heliopad-capped well deck deeming it, "one heck of a steel walled cave dive!"

The *Spiegel Grove*, now at rest in her is home is giving the island of Key Largo one more reason to boast as the "Dive Capital of the World!"  —Tom and Therisa Stack

Mandy-Rae Sets New Women's Static Apnea World Record

ON MAY 29, 2002, MANDY-RAE Cruickshank set a world record breath-hold time of 6 minutes and 16 seconds in the discipline of static apnea (or simple breath-hold). Two unsuccessful attempts due to sickness were made in the week prior to Mandy-Rae's record performance. The feat took place in Vancouver, Canada, under the scrutiny of judges from the Association for the International Development of Apnea (AIDA), the world governing body for

competitive freediving.

Mandy-Rae has been a competitor in breath-hold diving since her introduction to the sport by trainer and coach Kirk Krack in February of 2000. In September of 2001, she set the new bench-mark for overall depth in the women's no-limits discipline by riding a weighted sled to a depth of 447 feet.

Living in Vancouver, Mandy-Rae is the manager of Rowands Reef Scuba Shop and also teaches freediving programs throughout North America with Performance Freediving.

For more information and pictures of Mandy's record setting attempt go to www.performancefreediving.com. 



Mandy-Rae Cruickshank

PHOTOS: (SPIEGEL GROVE) TOM AND THERISA STACK; (MANDY-RAE) COURTESY PERFORMANCE FREEDIVING. OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY CHUCK BLAKESLEE

James "Jim" Jennings Auxier 1928 - 2002



THE WORLD OF DIVING LOST ONE OF ITS EARLY pioneers when Jim Auxier died on May 26, 2002. He will be remembered by family, friends, fellow divers and readers of *Skin Diver* as co-founder, owner/publisher of the magazine from 1951 to 1963.

Jim was the magazine's editor during those early years and stayed at that post three more years when *Skin Diver* was purchased by Petersen Publications. Jim was a quiet, reserved, dignified and serious individual. He also had a deep passion for diving. Before *Skin Diver*, he was a linotype operator and thoroughly trained printer for Chambers Printing in South Gate, CA. He set all the *hot* type for *Skin Diver* for the first two years of the magazine, before it had outgrown the capabilities of Chambers to handle the numbers of such a large printing.

As a printer/editor, he was very exacting and always tried to achieve perfection. He felt that once the word is printed it cannot be re-done and, like the sped arrow, may be hurtful, embarrassing or even deadly, as leaving out a by-line, misspelling a name or misquoting someone. To Jim, good proofreading was a must. We often laughed over proofreading sessions; usually those when Jim was on one page with me following on a second, only to disturb him with my deep breathing after falling asleep.

We often worked into the wee hours, catching a quick nap before reporting for our regular jobs the next morning. Over the years we dived together often, and vacationed together, sometimes with both our families. We made a good team, and as the size of our staff increased (to nine by 1963), we were

able to produce a more sophisticated magazine.

How did two relatively unschooled divers begin a magazine that would last for more than half a century? Jim and I knew there were dive clubs around the country as we belonged to a local club ourselves, the Compton Dolphins. But there was no organization to coordinate happenings or act as a common clearinghouse among the disparate groups. We discussed this fact and shortly thereafter "laid the keel."

We figured what our costs might be, mocked up the magazine and went hunting for advertisers. By December of 1952, after the first full year, we still had only 15. But as revenues grew and news began to come in from more and more areas of the world, one issue followed another, until by 1963, *Skin Diver* consisted of some 68 pages (previous issues had as

many as 112 pages) and was read all over the United States and in 90 foreign countries.

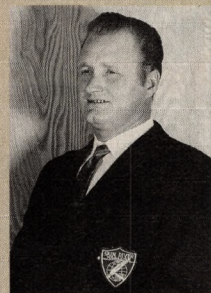
As editor of *Skin Diver* for the three years following the sale to Petersen, Jim was able to travel to many new destinations, such as the Red Sea and Cozumel. Dive travel had become the new direction of the magazine. Heading a skilled staff, he continued to prove his leadership capabilities until he retired. After Jim's retirement from *Skin Diver* in 1966, he and his family moved to Big Bear, CA, where his time was spent investing in real estate. He was very active in local organizations there, including Search and Rescue.

Jim suffered a debilitating stroke in 1984, but, true to his determination and mettle, he continued to travel. Moving to Georgia to be near his daughter and her family, even with his limitations, he spent the last few years still inter-

...the millions of readers touched by some 600 issues over 51 years of Skin Diver will continue to benefit from the dreams he put into print.

ested in developments in diving and the underwater world. Jim will be greatly missed. And the millions of readers touched by some 600 issues over 51 years of *Skin Diver* will continue to benefit from the dreams he put into print.

Jim Auxier is survived by a daughter, Yvonne Lee, a son, Michael and six grandchildren. —Chuck Blakeslee, co-founder and publisher of *Skin Diver* (1951-1963)



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Deforestation is just one of the destructive practices governments often undertake in the struggle to repay debt.



Service People, Not Debt

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

THESE DAYS, IT'S EASY TO BECOME A DEFEATIST. Confronted with global warming, overpopulation, the erosion of biodiversity and war, the average person throws up her hands in frustration.

For divers who see the difference between a site teeming with fish one year and devoid of fish the next, it is hard to ignore the signs of environmental decline.

It often seems that the processes of destruction are spiraling out of our control. But humans do still have the power to make a big difference. In one area of the environment, for example, people are changing the world in a fundamental way. I am talking about the cancellation of international debt.

What does debt have to do with the environment? Plenty. In fact, debt lies at the very root of many of the practices that most impact the world of water, such as overfishing and deforestation. To solve the debt crisis is to take a big step towards slowing, and perhaps even reversing, the momentum of environmental devastation.

According to the Jubilee Network, 42 nations are presently considered Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). The media prefer the term "developing nations." But that is a misnomer, because these nations are unable to develop. Why? The answer is debt. They should more precisely be known as the "debt servicing nations," because that is all

they are able to do. When interest is factored in, these nations repay up to nine times as much as they receive in aid.

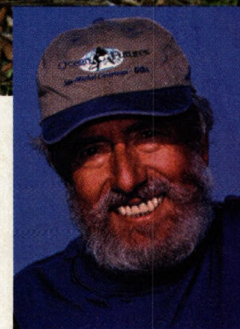
The human effects of debt are well documented. In Africa, four times as much money is spent on debt repayment than on health care, education and other human services. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the world's poorest place, nearly half of all people live in poverty—300 million subsist on less than one dollar per day. School enrollment and life expectancy are declining, and HIV/AIDS is ravaging the land.

To solve the debt crisis is to take a big step towards slowing, and perhaps even reversing, the momentum of environmental devastation.

Poverty is bad for the environment. All over the world, poor nations are compelled to raid their natural capital in an effort to pay off loans. Taken together, the HIPC nations suffer 50 percent more forest loss than non-indebted nations. In Central America, the figure is over 90 percent.

As they are presently structured, international loans are a declaration of war against the environment.

The present repayment regime creates an export-driven economy that ignores the needs of local people. It is a vicious



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cycle, for once a nation's environment has been ravaged, its people are even worse off—deforestation contributes to the loss of habitat and biodiversity, causes erosion and reduces water quality. Still, the people continue to pay. In Niger, 9 out of 10 people are illiterate, yet the country must cough up \$36 million per year in debt payments. In Mozambique, two of every three people have no access to clean water, yet the piper is paid, to the tune of \$54 million.

The problem started decades ago, when massive loans were made to countries who obviously could not repay them. The result was a new form of colonialism; a new form of slavery.

International outrage and economic pragmatism have merged in a movement to cancel debt. Oxfam, Jubilee 2000,

That is why the last of the big-time lenders, the IMF and World Bank, should cancel all remaining debt.

Despite the beneficence of lending nations, these two institutions have held themselves apart from debt relief. They now are responsible for all but a small amount of today's outstanding loans.

What is to keep them from following the examples of governments, and writing off their remaining loans? If this were to happen, global debt could be expected to plunge from \$22 billion to \$7.6 billion.

We are told that it would bankrupt lending institutions. Yet independent analyses suggest that the IMF and World Bank could afford to write off the debt without injuring their financial standing.

There is also the possibility that the G8 nations could sweeten the pill, and shoulder the IMF and World Bank burden themselves. What would that cost? According to Drop The Debt, it

...the United States, United Kingdom, Canada
and Italy have cancelled all bilateral debts.
Australia and Norway have done the same. On
paper, the total debt burden has fallen from \$40
to \$22 billion.

Drop The Debt and other organizations have built a worldwide coalition in support of the poor. And their voices have been heard. At the Millennium Conference in Cologne in 1999, major cuts in bilateral debts were announced. Of the G-8 nations, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Italy have cancelled all bilateral debts. Australia and Norway have done the same. On paper, the total debt burden has fallen from \$40 to \$22 billion.

What is being done with all that saved money? Countries like Uganda, Honduras and Tanzania have all invested heavily in education, while others, such as Senegal and Cameroon, are beefing up the health sector to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

But it isn't enough. Too many countries are still making payments, and some are even making higher payments than before the cancellation process began.

would amount to one dollar per year for all taxpaying citizens.

Imagine—one dollar to end the spiral of poverty and eco-cide, and give the world's poor a fresh start.

It sounds like a bargain to me.

The only way we can manage the global environment responsibly, is to ensure that nobody has an added incentive to destroy it. Just as education is the key to the population problem, debt cancellation is the key to the education problem. We cannot go on expecting hungry people to make responsible long-term decisions. By filling that stomach, and giving that mind a chance to soar, we have a chance to give millions of people a decent present and a hopeful future. And, because the environment is global, we also safeguard our own quality of life.

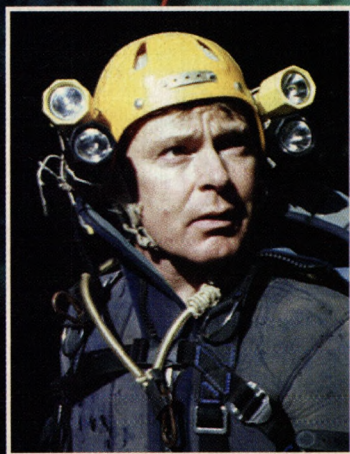
The time has come to service people, not debt. 🐟

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I am a relatively new underwater photo instructor and I'd like to know some things you think most underwater photographers could do to improve their work.—Teri S., Kona, HI

THIS CAN BE ANSWERED ON A NUMBER OF LEVELS. CERTAINLY there are proven techniques that all of us could apply with more discipline. For example, we would all benefit by getting closer to our subjects, and certainly a lot of underwater photographers would see a huge improvement in image quality if they paid more attention to lighting and strobe positioning. I'd really love to figure out a way to get my students to match their expectations and their equipment more closely so that, for example, they would pass up the wide shots of Manta Rays when they are swimming around with a macro system in their hands. Conversely, they would quit photographing nudibranchs with their wide-angle lenses.



An overlooked point is that success as an underwater photographer often depends as much on what you do, or don't do, before a dive as it does on what you do during the dive. I think that a lot of underwater photographers would get much more pleasing results far more often if they would think more about what they want to accomplish and how they plan to do so before they begin to set up their camera system.

When underwater photographers get together, I almost always hear people discussing and debating the best cameras, lenses, strobes and films. These days you can't get away from the digital vs. film question, but I maintain that it isn't format and it isn't gear that makes or breaks photographers. It is our minds and imaginations. I found it rather reassuring when I recently read a quote from George Lucas about his new film *Attack of the Clones* (of the *Star Wars* series) that was shot with High Definition Video rather than film. Lucas said something to the effect that despite all of the fuss made about shooting in High Definition, the success or failure of the film is all about storytelling, not format or equipment. It's George Lucas' vision that makes his films. Equipment is a tool that helps get the story told. I think advances in technology, and the sheer quantity of things to keep up with often causes underwater photographers to get off track. As a result many underwater photographers get hung up on the gear and forget about the content and composition of their images and the impact those images can have.

As a rule, we all want to talk about things we could do to create perfect shots once we are in the water, but most of the photographers that have a library full of great work credit their pre-dive setup and thought process with their success as much, or more, than their in-water techniques.

I don't blame anyone for just wanting to fall off

Know Before You Go

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN



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ASK THE PRO

of a boat, hit the water and enjoy the challenges of underwater photography. Using that technique, there is no doubt that you will probably "get lucky" every once in a while, but pre-dive thinking and attention to detail really does pay big dividends. I am talking about making sure batteries are charged, strobes fire, TTL (thyristor-thyristor-logic, often referred to as through-the-lens metering) exposure system is working properly, O-rings are cleaned and greased, and seating surfaces are clean.

I think these tasks often get overlooked because they aren't the fun part of underwater photography and most of us simply



What is more frustrating than finding a great subject, composing that perfect frame, tripping the shutter and having your strobe(s) fail to fire? Not much! But the good news is that an incident like that is usually easy to prevent via some pre-dive testing.

don't appreciate how important they are until things don't work underwater. What is more frustrating than finding a great subject, composing that perfect frame, tripping the shutter and having your strobe(s) fail to fire? Not much! But the good news is that an incident like that is usually easy to prevent via some pre-dive testing. Before the dive, you might discover that you put a battery in backwards, the batteries hadn't been charged or were old even though the package hadn't been opened, or perhaps your synch cord was faulty. Too many of us excuse the failure to test by saying things like "It isn't my fault, I just changed the batteries," or "Worked great yesterday."

Failing to test automatic exposure sys-

tems such as TTL by so many underwater photographers is especially troubling. If a TTL system fails, strobes often fire, but they tend to fire at full power. The end result is often that frame after frame is grossly over exposed. Verifying that a TTL system is working can be done within 15 seconds, but the failure to run the tests can cause a whole dive, and even an entire dive trip, to be a complete washout.

I think everyone that came to the Kona Classic, *Skin Diver's* recent photo competition in Hawaii, and participated in the photo competition and attended the seminars had a lot of fun. I am also sure that most of the winners thought about how to get their winning images before they hit the water. In fact, at the Kona Classic,

John Monk told me how he and wife Linda developed an idea about what they could do to get a great shot of a turtle if they encountered one near the surface. Well, they got their opportunity and turned their pre-dive discussion into a first place in the wide-angle category. There is no way that could have happened if they hadn't considered the possibility before their dives and if their gear hadn't been working properly.

My bottom line answer to the original question is, I think being disciplined in your pre-dive thinking and testing, developing an in-water "game plan," and trying to apply proven techniques will go a long way toward helping every level of photographer find success. 🐟

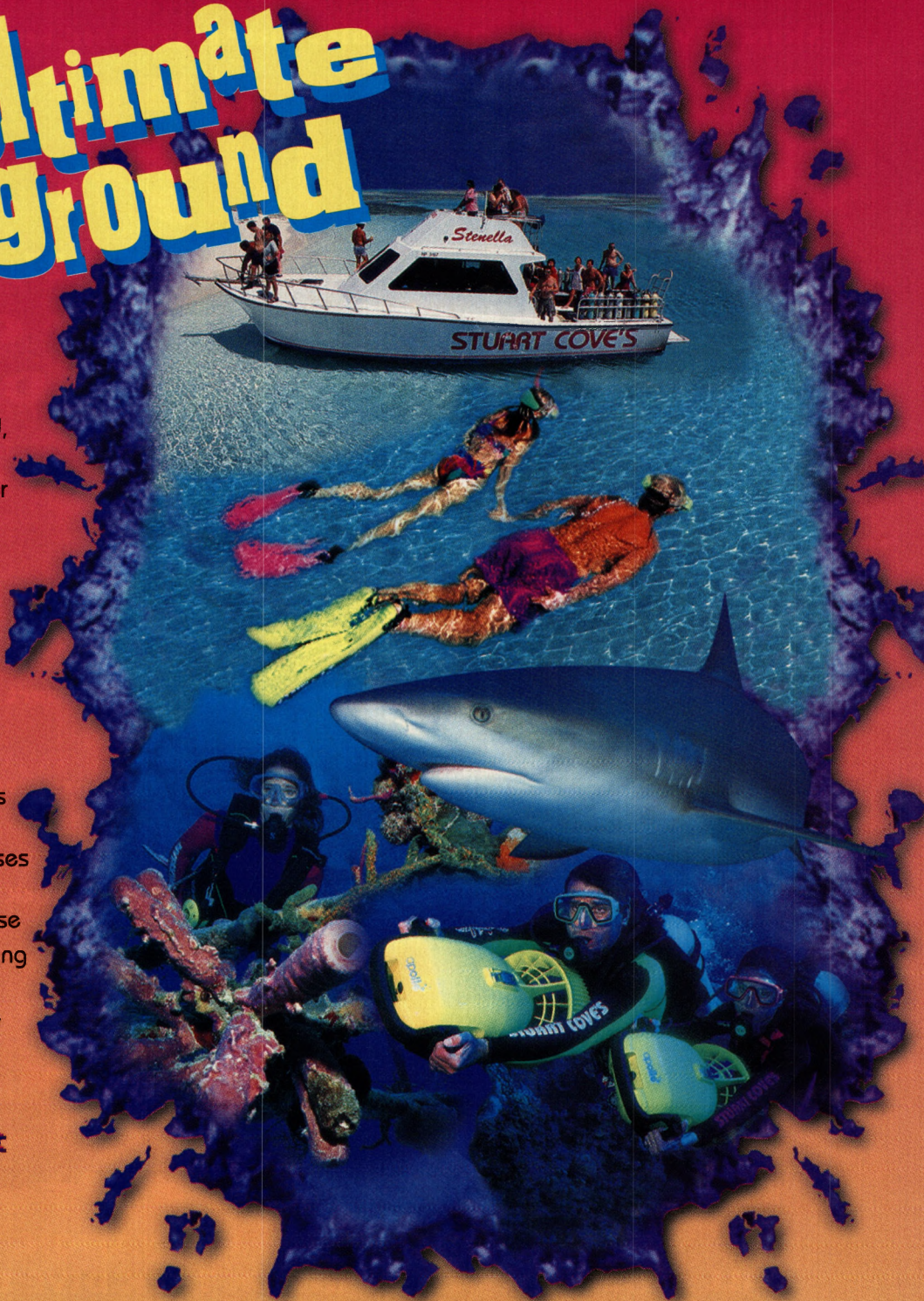
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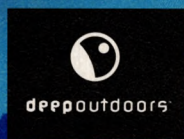
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The freighter SS *Chickasaw*, formerly the USS *Thurston*, ran aground in 1962 off Santa Rosa Island.

STUART SIMPSON, VIA THE INTERNET, SAYS his father served aboard the USS *Thurston* during WW II, and thinks his ship was sunk off California long after the war ended. He would like to know what happened to it.

While I found some basic information about the *Thurston*, originally named *Del Santos*, Stuart found a few more details in *History of United States Naval Operations in WW II*. Then Stuart's brother discovered a website (www.cinms.nos.noaa.gov) and the puzzle came together. When we learned that the 459-foot freighter was commissioned by the Navy in 1942 and renamed SS *Chickasaw* in 1948 when she returned to merchant trading, the rest was easy. In addition to the website, we found six pages and four photos of the vessel in Pat Smith's book, *Shipwrecks of Southern California*, in which the author calls the *Chickasaw* "a treasure cache of military history."

Operating in both the European and Pacific theaters of war as the USS *Thurston*, the 6,131-ton troop ship earned seven battle stars, including one in the D-day invasion of Omaha Beach in 1944. She also delivered troops and supplies during campaigns in Morocco, Sicily, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Guadalcanal. After stops in the Philippines and Japan, the heroic vessel returned to San Francisco where she was decommissioned in 1946. The venerable veteran continued as a civilian freighter until she ran aground in 1962 off Santa Rosa Island, in what is now the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary. Although the captain

and his crew were rescued, the SS *Chickasaw* was far too entrenched on the reefs and rocks for salvage. Violent winds and heavy seas have taken their toll, scattering most of the wreckage across the bottom. Prevailing winds, poor visibility and a rocky coastline make this a venturesome encounter for experienced divers.

HEATHER HOUGH, VIA THE INTERNET, wants to know where she can obtain information about shipwrecks off the Oregon coast, especially ones that are close to shore. *Oregon*

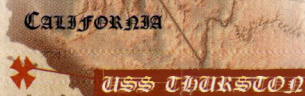
The USS *Thurston*

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

Shipwrecks by Don Marshall is an excellent source. The *Mimi* is a good example of one that's not far offshore. An iron-hulled German bark, sunk in 1913 off Nehalem, OR, the vessel was stranded on a spit for two months while the crew removed most of the ballast. But a storm capsized her, killing 14 crew and four salvors. She sank one and a half miles north of the Nehalem jetty—800 feet out on the north spit—directly off Brighton.



BOB JENKINS OF ANAHEIM, CA, is planning a trip to Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands, and needs some hints on diving the USS *Saratoga*. The





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Details of these and other attractions aboard the *Saratoga* are described in a new book, *Diving Micronesia*, by Eric Hanauer. (Aqua Quest Publications, Locust Valley, NY).

DAVE CLANCY HAS SET UP A detailed website called, Hunting New England Shipwrecks. He says it's, "a web

MIKE CRAIGHEAD OF STERLING, VA, asks a provocative question about slave ships. He wants to know if any slavers have been identified, other than the *Henrietta Marie*—sunk in the Florida Keys—that divers might research and explore. Travis Henson, secretary of the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore, MD, recommends a museum visit to see a replica of a slave ship. Seven others are on record there: *Holy Mary*, *John the Baptist*, *Liberty*, *Justice*, *Jesus*, *Amazing Grace* and *Amistad*. Dr. Joann Martin, owner of the museum, offers personal tours if you call (410) 563-7809. The Maryland Historical Society, also in Baltimore, provides books and microfilm for research. I'm sure some of the ships were eventually forced out of the slave trade, while others may have sunk in storms or run aground on treacherous shoals. This research would be an intriguing project.

DAVE CLANCY...has set up a detailed website called, Hunting New England Shipwrecks...listing over 200 New England wrecks with promises of more to come. Try his site: <http://wreckhunter.net>.

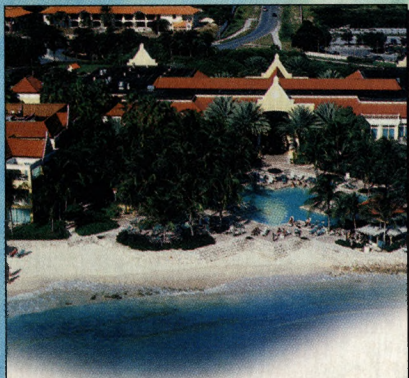
guide for divers and armchair adventurers," listing over 200 New England wrecks with promises of more to come. Dave says he has included a message board, online nautical charts, a trivia quiz and more. Check out his website at www.wreckhunter.net.

RICH FREEMAN OF THE Atlantis Rangers, Greenbelt, MD, has been diving in the Chesapeake Bay and needs information on the *San Marcos*. Two books, *Shipwrecks Unforgotten* by Norbert Freitag and *Shipwrecks on the Chesapeake* by Don Shomette, offer details on this 6,315-ton battleship sunk off Tangier Island, VA, in 1911. Originally christened the USS *Texas* in 1895, the two-masted, one stack warship was later renamed *San Marcos*. She was scuttled as a gunnery target when her coal-fired steam power became obsolete. Shells from the battleship *New Hampshire* took their toll on the *San Marcos*, whose remains are scattered in 25 to 30 feet of water.

JOHN PAPINEAU OF ANCHORAGE, AK, writes, "I spent several weeks in the Madang area of Papua New Guinea. While I was there, I dove the remains of the USS *Boston*, a WW II minesweeper. When I returned home, I searched for the ship in Samuel Morison's *History of United States Naval Operations in WW II*, but found nothing. Where else can I look?" I suggest James Mooney's *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. If it's not there, write to Kathleen M. Lloyd, Head, Operational Archives, U.S. Navy Historical Center, Washington, DC 20374. Ms. Lloyd and her staff have been very helpful tracing WW II vessels and historic events in naval warfare.

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at ellboyd@aol.com. 🐟

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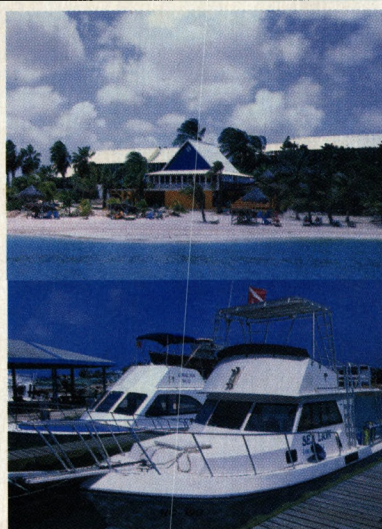
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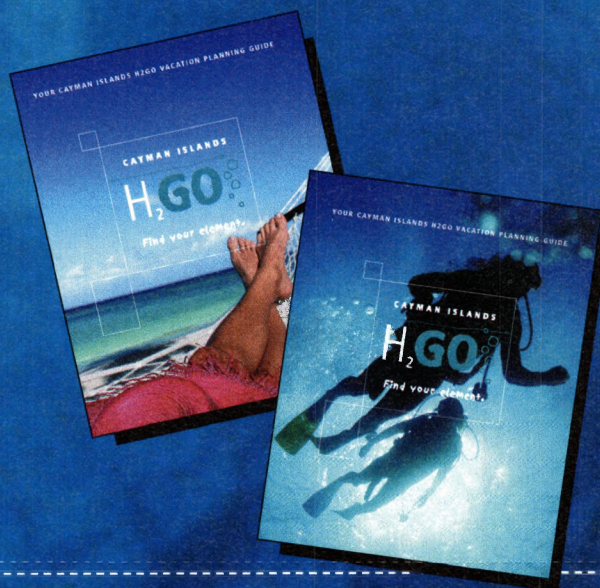


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NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN A PRIZE. A PURCHASE WILL NOT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING.

1. Sweepstakes open to legal residents of the US and Wash. DC age 18 or older. The Cayman Islands H2GO "Find your element" Sweepstakes (the "Sweepstakes") begins at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) on 5/1/02 and ends 11:59 p.m. (ET) on 10/31/02 ("Entry Period"). There will be six monthly drawings during the Entry Period. HOW TO ENTER: There are three methods of entry. Entry Method #1: To enter online, visit the www.caymanislands.ky/h2go web site and follow all online entry instructions, including completing and submitting the online entry form and answering all sweepstakes questions. Online entries must be received by 11:59 PM (ET) on 10/31/02. Entry Method #2: To enter by mail with an official entry form, hand print your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and your answers to the sweepstakes questions requested on official entry form, insert in envelope and mail to P.O. Box address in Method #3. Entry Method #3: To enter by mail without an official entry form, hand-print your name, address, telephone number, email address and your answers to the sweepstakes questions on a postcard and mail to: The Cayman Islands H2GO "Find Your Element" Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 9179, Medford, NY 11763-9179. All mail-in entries must be postmarked by 10/31/02 and received by 11/7/02. Answers to the sweepstakes questions can be found online at www.caymanislands.ky/h2go or in our H2GO Vacation Planning Guide. To obtain a free guide, call 1-800-4-CAYMAN, ext. 0 between 9 AM 5 PM (ET) during Mon. - Fri. [All requests for guides must be received by 5 PM (ET) on 9/27/02.] To be eligible for a given monthly drawing, answers to the sweepstakes questions must be correct. All entries become the property of Sponsor and will not be returned or acknowledged. Limit: One received email or mail-in entry per person per month. In the event of a dispute over the identity of an online entrant, entry will be deemed submitted by the holder of the e-mail account. Mass entries or entries generated by a script, macro or use of automated devices will be disqualified. No mechanical reproductions permitted. Photocopied or incomplete entries are void. PRIZES/ODDS: Six (6) Grand Prizes (one awarded per month during the Entry Period) of a 7 nights/ 6 days trip for two to Cayman Islands are guaranteed to be awarded. Approximate retail value (ARV) of each trip prize: \$3,500.00; depending in location of winner and fares at time of departure. Each trip prize includes round-trip coach airfare to/from the winner's primary residence, double occupancy hotel accommodations and 6 daily local diving trips for winner plus 1 guest. Travel must be completed within 10 months from date the prize is awarded. Parent or legal guardian must accompany a traveling minor. Travel subject to availability and certain blackout dates may apply. Six (6) Second Prizes (one awarded per month during the Entry Period): A SeaLife 121 Digital DC 200 Underwater Camera (ARV: \$549.95 each). Thirty (30) Third Prizes (five awarded per month during the Entry Period): A SeaLife 545 SportDiver Underwater Camera (ARV: \$100.00 each). Maximum ARV of all prizes: \$26,299.70. Prizes are not transferable or redeemable for cash and no substitution of prize by a winner is permitted. All taxes and any other incidental expenses are the sole responsibility of each winner. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received per monthly drawing, estimated at 1:266,667. WINNER SELECTION: One winner will be selected per month for a total of six months beginning on 5/1/02 and ending on 10/31/02. The first entry containing the correct answers to the sweepstakes questions that is selected at random from among all eligible entries received during that month will be declared that month's winner. Each monthly random drawing will be held within 15 days of the end of that month. Limit: one prize per person. To be eligible for a given monthly drawing your online entry must be received between 12:01 AM (ET) on the first day of the month and 11:59 PM (ET) on the last day of that given month. Your mail-in entry must be postmarked between the first day of that month and the last day of that given month and received within 7 days thereafter. For any given mail-in entry deadline that falls on a Sunday or federal holiday, those entries will also be accepted on the next business day. If during any month no entries are received for the monthly drawing, that month's prize will be awarded as an additional prize in the following month, provided a sufficient number of entries are received for that month. This process will be repeated until all monthly prizes are awarded. If no entries are received for the last monthly drawing, then the final monthly prize will be awarded from among all eligible entries received in the previous months. WINNER NOTIFICATION: All random drawings will be conducted under supervision of an independent judging organization whose decisions are final and binding. Each winner will be notified by mail, or phone or email within 14 days after the drawing. To be declared a winner, all potential winners must complete & return an affidavit of eligibility and liability/publicity release within 14 days of date specified on notification, or an alternate winner will be selected. Travel companion must execute a travel release prior to travel. Winner and travel companion are responsible for obtaining proper documentation (i.e., passports) prior to travel. Prizes will be awarded within 30 days after prize notification or receipt of properly executed affidavit. If an affidavit or prize notification is returned as undeliverable, it will result in disqualification, and the corresponding prize will be awarded to an alternate winner in a separate random drawing from all non-winning eligible entries. Entry & acceptance of prize constitute permission to use a winner's name, prize won, hometown & likeness for promotional purposes without further compensation, except where prohibited by law. ADDITIONAL RULES: Entrants assume all liability for any injury, loss or damage caused or claimed to be caused by your participation in the Sweepstakes and/or the acceptance, awarding, receipt, use and/or misuse of any prize, and release Sponsor, its respective affiliates, subsidiaries, directors, employees and agents, and all others associated with the development and execution of this sweepstakes from any such liability. Winners acknowledge that Sponsor and all other companies concerned with this sweepstakes and their agents do not make, nor are in any manner responsible for, any warranty, representations, expressed or implied, in fact or in law, relative to the quality, conditions or fitness of any aspects of the prizes. Sponsor does not make, nor in any manner will be responsible for, any warranty, representation or guarantee relating to the camera prizes; provided, however, all prizes will be subject to the manufacturer's standard warranty. LIST OF WINNERS: For a list of winners (available after 12/31/02), send a stamped, self-addressed stamped envelope by 10/31/02 to: "Find your element" Sweepstakes Winners, P.O. Box 9183, Medford, NY 11763-9183. SPONSOR: Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, The Pavillion, Cricket Square, P.O. Box 67 GT, George Town, Grand Cayman, B.W.I.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

To enter: complete information below and answer questions on reverse side.

Name

Address

City

State Zip

Phone ()

e-mail (optional)

Have you ever visited the Cayman Islands?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you ever visited the Caribbean?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Mail in a stamped envelope to:
Cayman Islands H2GO "Find your element" Sweepstakes
PO Box 9179
Medford, NY 11763-9179

Sweepstakes ends: 10/31/02

PARTICIPATING CAYMAN ISLANDS H2GO PARTNERS.

Sponsors:

Sunshine Suites Resort-A Summerfield Suites by Wyndham, On the Bay Condos, The Club at Little Cayman, Brac Aquatics, Cayman Diving Lodge, Sunset House and Sunset Divers, Beach Club Colony, Spanish Bay Reef Resort, Cayman Inn and Resort and Diver's Down, Treasure Island Resort and Bob Soto's Reef Divers, Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman and Red Sail Sports, Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort and Red Sail Sports, Comfort Suites and Don Foster's Dive, Cobalt Coast Resort and Dive Tech.

Participants:

Hotels

Brac Reef Beach Resort, Beach Club Colony Resort, Cayman Inn & Resort, Cobalt Coast Resort & Suites, Comfort Suites, Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort, Holiday Inn Resort, Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, Indies Suites, Little Cayman Beach Resort, Morritt's Tortuga Club & Resort, Seaview Hotel & Dive Resort, Spanish Bay Reef Resort, Sunset House, Sunshine Suites Resort - a Summerfield Suites by Wyndham, The Reef, Treasure Island Resort, Westin Casuarina Hotel.

Condos

Britannia Villas, Christopher Columbus Condos, Crescent Point Condos, Discovery Point Club, Lacovia Condominiums, Regal Beach Club, Seagull Condominiums, Tamarind Bay Condos, Treasure Island Condominiums, Villas of the Galleon.

Restaurants

Almond Tree/Tree House, Britannia, Casa Havana, Castaways, Chicken! Chicken!, Cimboco, Cracked Conch, David's Restaurant, Deckers, DJ's Restaurant & Cantina, Duppies, Eats Cafe, Edoardo's Restaurant, Ferdinands, Governor's Terrace Restaurant, Grille Restaurant, Hemmingways, Lazy Lizard, Lighthouse Restaurant, Lobster Pot Restaurant, London House, Lone Star Bar & Grill, Mangrove Grill, Naked Fish Restaurant, Outback Steakhouse, Peninsula Restaurant, Rum Point Restaurant, Seagrape Café, Seaharvest Restaurant, Smugglers Cove, Stingers Bar & Restaurant, Subway, Windows Lounge.

Watersports

Aquanauts Diving, Atlantis Submarine Adventures Cayman, Bayside Watersports, Black Princess Charters, Bob Soto's Reef Divers, Capt. Crosby's Watersports, Capt. Don's Cayman Diver, Captain Marvin's Watersports, Cayman Delight Cruises, Cayman Diving Lodge, Cayman Submariners, DiveTech, Divi Dive & Photo Tiara - Cayman Brac, Don Foster's Dive Cayman, Eden Rock Diving Center, Island Girl Charters, Jolly Roger, Ocean Frontiers, Pirates Point Resort, Red Sail Sports, Reef Divers I - Little Cayman, Reef Divers II - Cayman Brac, Resort Sports, Seaview Dive Center, Sunset Divers, Tortuga Divers, Treasure Island Divers.

Weddings & Honeymoons

Brac Reef Beach Resort, Beach Club Colony Resort, Beachcomber, Cobalt Coast Resort & Suites, Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort, Grand Old House, Holiday Inn Resort, Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, Indies Suites, Little Cayman Beach Resort, Plantana, Seaview Hotel & Dive Resort, The Anchorage, Treasure Island Resort, Westin Casuarina Hotel.

Golf

Sunrise Family Golf Centre

Nightclubs

Insomnia, Matrix, Next Level

Car & Jeep Rental

Andy's Rent A Car, Brac Rent-A-Car, Budget Rent A Car, Cayman Auto Rentals, CICO Avis Rent-A-Car, Coconut Car Rentals, Soto's Jeep and Car Rental, Sunshine Car Rentals/Cayman Convertible, Thrifty Car Rental.

Bicycle Rental

Soto's Jeep and Car Rental, Sunshine Car Rentals/Cayman Convertible.

Spas & Salons

Brac Reef Beach Resort, Eclipse Hair Design & Day Spa, Gary Callan International, Little Cayman Beach Resort, Spa Esprit.

Retailers

Bob Soto's Reef Divers, Bob Soto's Reef Divers Signature Store, Captain Marvin's Watersports, DiveTech, Eden Rock Diving Center, Beach Club Colony Resort (Hotel Gift Shop), Spanish Bay Reef Resort (Hotel Gift Shop), Mermaid's Gift Shop, Polly's Landing, Reef Divers I - Little Cayman, Reef Divers II - Cayman Brac, Seaview Dive Center, Treasure Island Divers.

Kids

Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, Resort Sports.

OVER THE YEARS, I'VE HAD SEVERAL ENCOUNTERS WITH Manta Rays, but none so intimate as one day in the Maldives.

There were eight of us on the reef that day, and we were at one of several sites where Mantas are known to frequent the local cleaning stations. Manta season for this area was about over; when the monsoon changes, the Mantas move to the other side of the atoll to feed on the abundant plankton it brings. As plankton increases, visibility decreases, and as photographers, we opted for the clearest waters in the Maldives.

Manta Ray: *Manta birostris*

BY DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT AND LARRY TACKETT

So, there we were, on the wrong side of the atoll, in extraordinarily clear waters, hoping for a glimpse of a giant Manta Ray. Experience told me to focus on reef scenes and forget the Mantas. I let the group go on ahead and found a pretty spot with lots of Golden Sweepers. I got my shots, turned to shoot from another angle, and

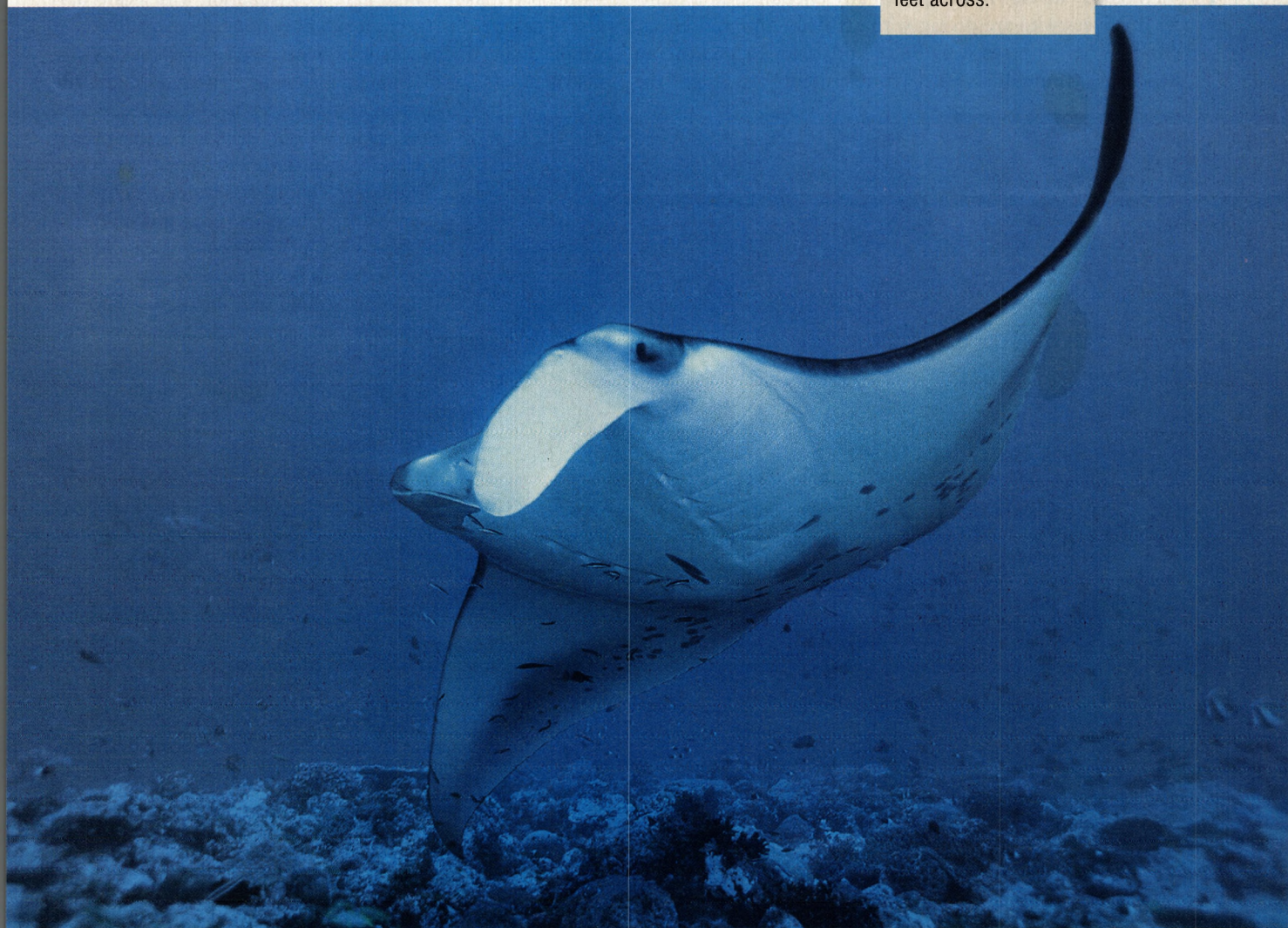
found myself face-to-face with a Manta Ray.

Hanging at eye level, it was poised and motionless, as if suspended by invisible threads. I could have touched it. Instead, I made eye contact and let the Manta make the first move. In a swift and silent motion, it rose over my head, encircled the reef and came to rest, face-to-face again. This time I reached out and ever so gently ran my fingertips along the edge of the wing. The Manta stayed. I grew bolder and ran my hand over the smooth black surface, expecting the ray to dash away at any moment.

When it did move, the Manta again circled the reef and came back to me. I shot a few frames as it swam toward me, then extended a hand to greet my new friend. I rubbed its stomach and wondered if my bubbles tickled as they danced across the huge belly. There was one more pass around the reef, before sweeping by for a final encounter and disappearing into the blue. Wow.... 🐟

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Manta Rays are circumtropical and range in size from 6 to 22 feet across.



MEDICINE HAS COME A LONG WAY WITH artificial implants. We have artificial hips, knees and other joints; artificial lenses in the eye; artificial bones in the middle ear; implanted pacemakers; breast and penile implants; and artificial hearts. Even jewelry pierced through the skin could be considered an implant. With the large population of sport divers, it is inevitable that a diver with an implant will ask if diving is safe. One important rule is that the implant cannot have any air spaces, as it would be compressed when pressure increases during descent.

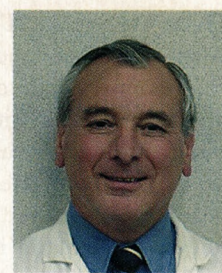
Jewelry pierced through the skin is not a problem, although some items could be pulled or torn from the skin while diving. Fluid-filled implants, such as breast and penile implants, are not affected, but artificial ear bones risk damage from diving. Ear squeeze would cause the artificial bones that connect the eardrum to the hearing mechanism to be displaced and hearing to be lost in the affected ear. Ear specialists recommend against diving with artificial ear bones. Artificial joints, however, seem to be well-tolerated by divers. I have personally encountered a number of divers who are diving with artificial hips and knees. The new joints restore mobility and seem to present no difficulties. Individuals with artificial joints are taught the

limitations of motion and stress that the joints can bear, but these are easily avoided when diving. There appears to be no increase in risk for decompression sickness from the artificial joints.

Divers who undergo cataract surgery usually have an artificial lens implanted in the eye to restore vision.

This is a small plastic lens that is inserted in the place of the blemished lens that has been removed. Ophthalmologists indicate that the artificial lens will not be affected by diving. One caution is to wait a few weeks after cataract surgery before flying or diving to be certain that any air left in the eye after surgery is absorbed.

Heart pacemakers are usually designed to withstand pressures up to about 130 feet of depth. Sport diving with a



Diving With Implants

pacemaker is not limited by the pacemaker itself, as long as depth is maintained shallower than 130 feet. Many patients with heart pacemakers have other heart problems, so a diver with a pacemaker should have a consultation with a cardiologist to be sure that there are no other heart abnormalities that would limit diving. People who receive pacemakers are instructed to avoid arm and shoulder exercises until the implantation surgery is well healed. There is a small risk of dislodging the pacing wires if healing is not complete. Swimming should be avoided for a few months after implantation, but after the healing is complete, swimming should be a part of conditioning for diving.

Diving should not be done with an Implanted Cardiac Defibrillator. The devices are designed to shock the heart back to a normal rhythm when a lethal heart rhythm is detected by the device. They cause the patient to experience a severe jolt from an internal electric shock to the heart. A diver might lose consciousness before the device discharges, or if awake, would experience a shock underwater. Either event would risk the life of the diver by drowning. People with implanted artificial hearts or heart assist devices are not candidates for diving.

Artificial implants have restored health and mobility to many thousands of people. In many cases, divers with implants can return to diving after a period of recovery and consultation with their physician.

You can find more on diving medicine at www.scubamed.com.



Divers with pacemakers should be able to dive safely as long as they maintain a depth shallower than 130 feet.

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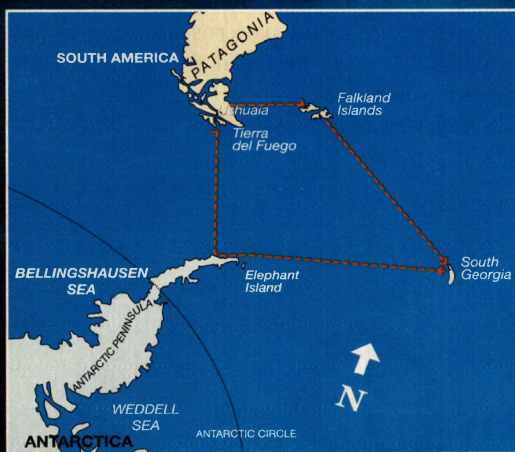
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Underwater Kinetics HYDRALLOY Knives

The two features divers need most in a knife are functionality and durability. That's what Underwater Kinetics has tried to blend in their HYDRALLOY knives. A unique combination of metal alloys makes these blades both strong and corrosion resistant.

The Blue Tang is available with either drop point or blunt tip blade. Its comfort grip provides the traction needed for the work of a big knife, and the blade offers a variety of cutting surfaces—serrated, smooth and a hooked line cutter. The smaller Raptor is a blunt tip design. It's slim, and therefore easy to hide inside a pocket or attach to a BC, while its large serrated blade is wicked sharp.

Underwater Kinetics: (858) 513-9111, www.uwkinetics.com



Dive Goddess Active-Wear

We all know it's important to be safe when diving, but Dive Goddess has an equal passion to be stylish. The Cosmic Tropic dive skin is the latest addition to Dive Goddess' stylish active-wear and is just one of the many designs available.

Skins are ideal for warm-water diving, replacing shorties or regular wetsuits. They help keep body temperature normal underwater, but most importantly, they protect divers from irritants, such as coral and jellyfish. Topside, skins are an easy solution for sunscreen. They can also be used under wetsuits for additional warmth.

This "high-quality, visually distinctive active wear" is also great in less than ideal visibility. Their colorful patterns are easy to spot underwater. Dive Goddess skins are designed for both men and women, and are available in seven sizes.

Dive Goddess: (817) 569-9669, www.divegoddess.com

Sea & Sea MX-5II and YS-20A

The MX-5II is a compact 35 mm point-and-shoot that offers much more than the traditional "aim and blame" camera. The non-corrosive, translucent polymer case offers rugged protection for a wide 28 mm f/9 focus-free lens. There is also an exterior bayonet mount for an accessory close-up lens, which lets you get to within 14 inches of your subject. The camera uses a hassle-free fixed shutter speed of $\frac{1}{100}$ second, plus auto film load, advance and rewind. DX coding reads ISO 100 and ISO 400 film.

Perhaps the nicest feature of the MX-5II is its ability to be used with the new YS-20A companion strobe. There are no dials, no decisions; everything is automatic. And, it works from an infrared optical triggering system that synchronizes itself with the camera's shutter; there are no cords or cables, and therefore no chance of leakage at the flash connection.

Sea & Sea: (760) 929-1909, www.seaandsea.com



Atomic Aquatics M1 Regulator

The M1 incorporates a relatively new material to dive equipment—Monel. This high strength, oxygen-compatible material is also highly corrosion resistant and is used in the M1's first stage. But some of the more noticeable innovations of the M1 have more to do with the second stage design. For divers who like to hang out in a stiff current (think shark action in Palau), the front cover is designed to reduce the possibility of freeflow from increased pressure on the diaphragm. Also, photographers will appreciate the new extended exhaust deflector, which does a better job of keeping bubbles out of the way. And, as if all that weren't enough, Atomic has environmentally sealed the first stage, improved the dry exhaust valve, and put a heat sink in the second stage to ward off the freezing effects of the extreme cold...just in case you ditch Palau for the chilly climes of Canada.

Atomic Aquatics: (714) 375-1433, www.atmicaquatics.com



SUUNTO Vytac Computer

A serious computer for the serious diver, the Suunto Vytac is really three instruments in one. On one level it operates as a regular nitrox compatible dive computer, offering a clear display, back lighting and easy push-button operation in a hoseless, air-integrated design. However, for divers who train and plan to exceed the no decompression limits, the Vytac offers gas switching capabilities up to 99 percent oxygen. Decompression gases can be pre-programmed and switched to as gas changes are made (so long as a gas switch does not exceed an acceptable PO₂ level). Finally, this little gem from Suunto can be used in gauge mode to simply keep track of depth and time, a nice toy for freedivers, and a great tool for those who use trimix. There is even a resettable timer to track individual deco stops.

Suunto: (760) 597-5000, www.sea-quest.com

DeepOutdoors Submariner Dive Bag

Wheels? Check. Shoulder straps? Check. Lots of room? Double Check. This is the criteria by which most dive bags are measured. For DeepOutdoors, this was only the beginning. The Submariner is a rolling duffel that will make you weep with appreciation of all its diver-friendly features. For instance, stuff this bag completely full and it will still zip shut, thanks to a new stretchy (but quite strong) material used to ring the opening of the main compartment. It accommodates large loads without stressing out the zipper, and the dry compartment utilizes water guard zippers so that "dry" really means dry. In addition to such design detail, there are handles where you need handles for pushing, shoving and schlepping this bag all over the world. Two side "fin flip" panels give extra support to the bag, but also serve to hold fins if space inside is too tight. Inside, the bag has a tarpaulin bottom, corner guards and drain holes. Available in three sizes, the Submariner is not just a dive bag, it's adventure luggage for people who find adventure underwater.

DeepOutdoors: (866) 867-7739, www.deepoutdoors.com



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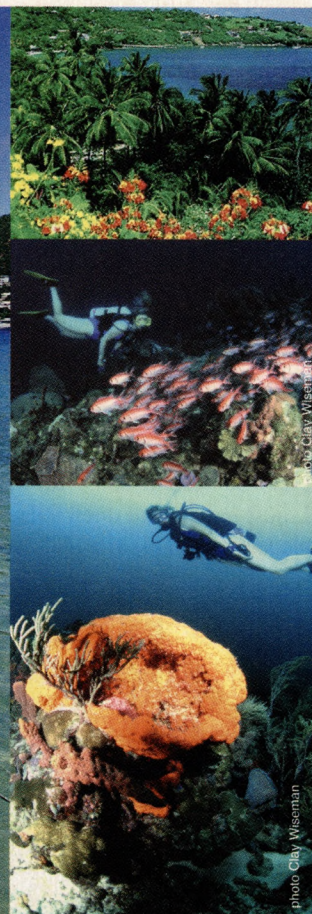


photo: City Wiseman

Aqua Cat at anchor in the Exuma Cays
Land and Sea Park, Bahamas

AQUA CAT CRUISES

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Suncoast Scuba Club

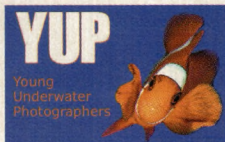
ANY CLUB THAT PUTS A PARTY PICTURE on the opening page of its website is good by me. Suncoast Scuba Club of Tampa, FL, is just that kind of club. This group of divers enjoy recreational diving around the state and throughout the Caribbean. Weekend summer trips include adventures to the Southeast coast, and visits to Cayman Brac, Bahamas, Grand Turk, Cozumel and Dominica.

Suncoast Scuba Club members are U/W photography enthusiasts—and printers—as they put out a calendar each year of their work. Also active in local environmental and conservation events, Suncoast Scuba Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month and is always looking for new members.

To find out more information, visit www.suncoastscuba.net.

Yep, That's Y-U-P— Young Underwater Photographers

YOUNG UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHERS, or YUP, is an organization set up to help more young people enjoy underwater photography. YUP is a newly formed group, founded in 2002, and was established for underwater photographers under the age of 30.



The organization's goal is "to provide a place to showcase their work and to act as information resource for underwater photography," and it does that via its website. The website has links to diaries of the photogs, U/W photo events, each member's website, manufactures and, most importantly, to photographs taken by members of YUP. 🐟

To get inspired, visit www.yup.org.uk, no matter how old—or young—you are.

Send your club news to
allenr@primediacmmg.com.

Hammerheads Soak Up the Sun

HAMMERHEADS WILL BE SOAKING up the sun this summer at festivals worldwide. From across the globe, they will hit the scene all year long with the rest of the country's most avid adventurers at the Jeep World Outdoor Festival.

A celebration of the outdoor, active lifestyle, the festival will pay homage to such adventure sports as



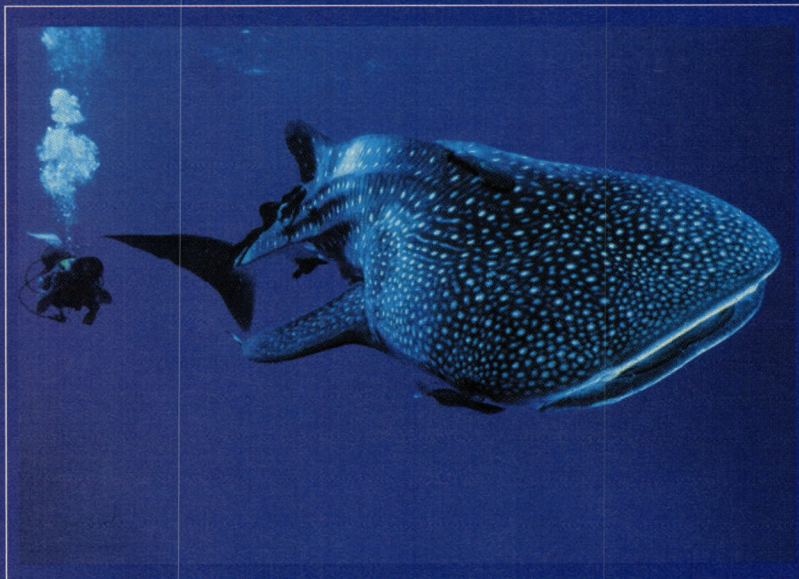
rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking and, of course, scuba diving.

Attendees will enjoy the sounds of artists like Sheryl Crow, Train and Ziggy Marley, and get wet thanks to The Pool Tour, which will be on hand to recruit new divers.

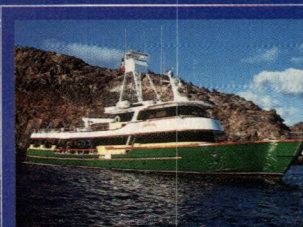
For more info, call (858) 616-6408 or check out www.hammerheads.com. 🐟

DIVE CLUB NEWS
EDITED BY MICHELLE DANNER

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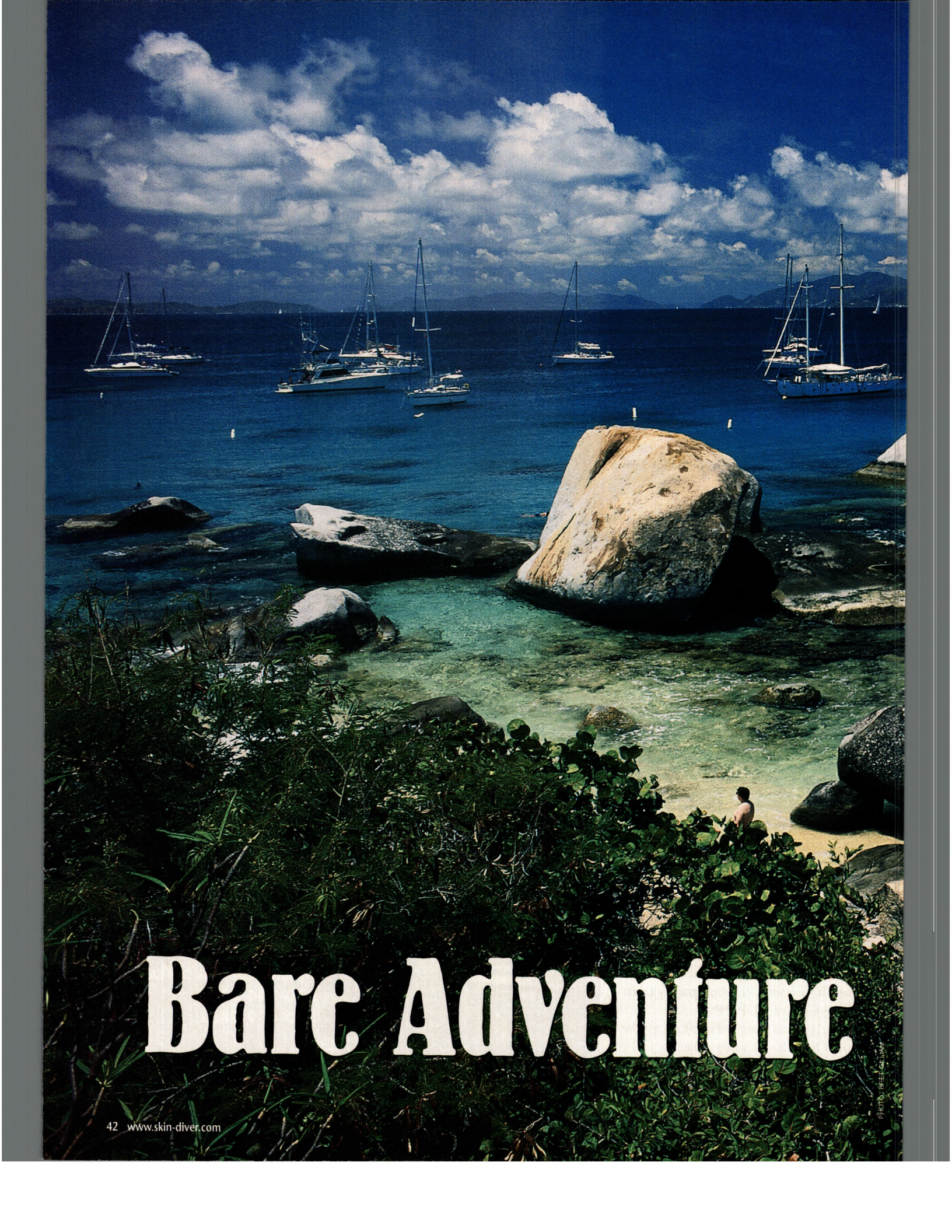
310-459-9861

Internet Specials at
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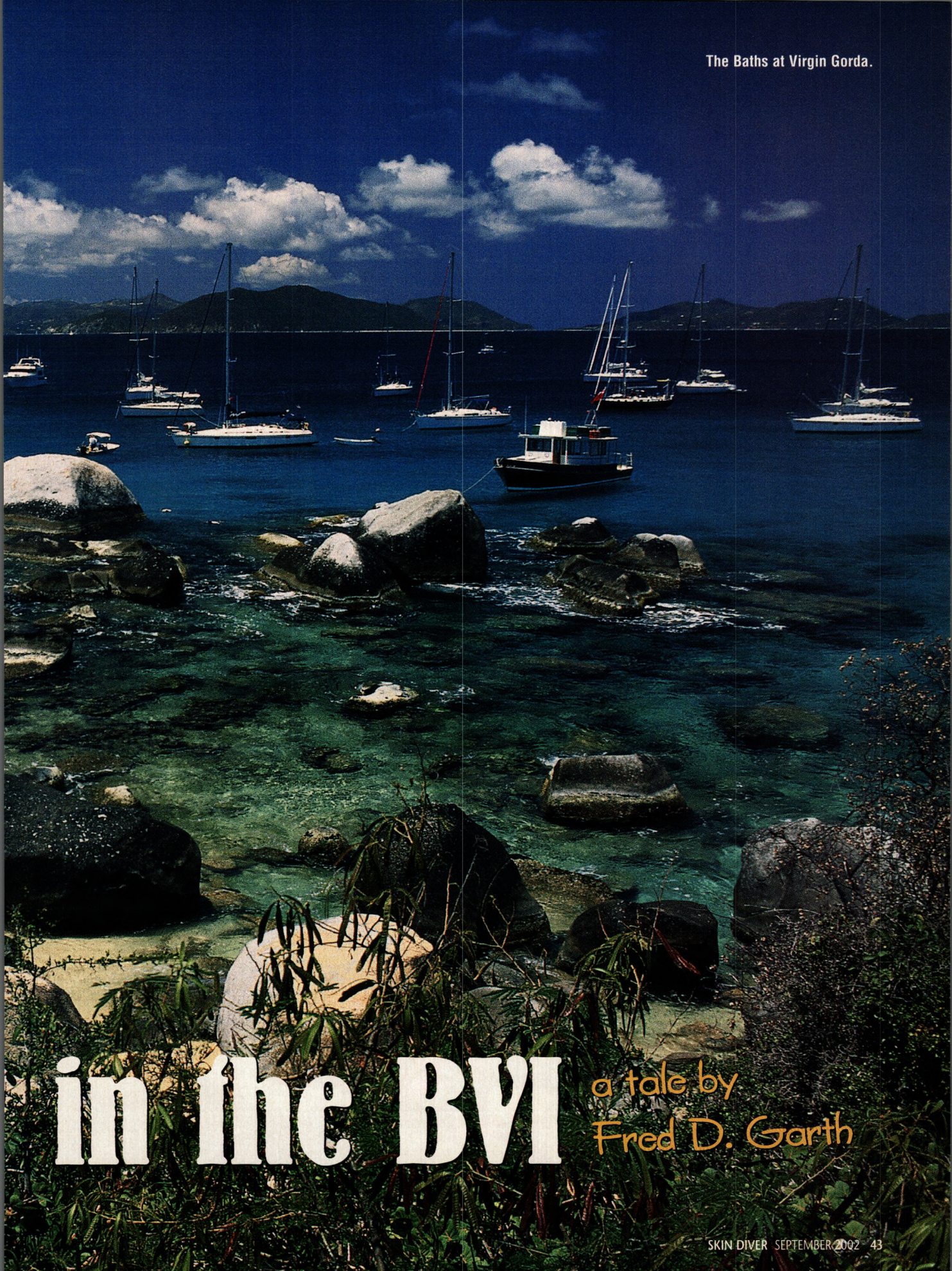
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PHOTO: COURTESY SUNCOAST SCUBA CLUB



Bare Adventure

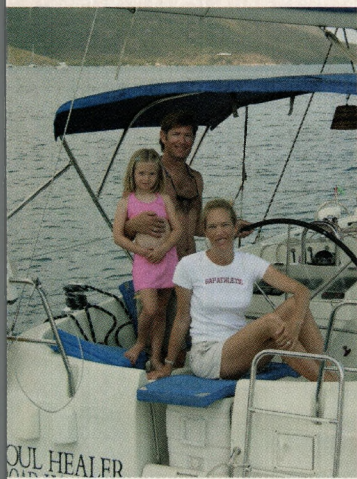
The Baths at Virgin Gorda.



in the BVI

a tale by
Fred D. Garth

There are certain things you never want to hear: Your surgeon muttering “Oops,” the boss demanding that “We’ve got to talk,” or your six-year-old asking “Daddy, where’s the dinghy?”



Valiant crew of the Soul Healer.

When I heard the call, I was down in the cabin and perfectly primed for dinner. The wind was testing the anchor of our 42-foot sailboat and the night had gone dark. Damn dark. I had no choice but to leap up on deck to see if my daughter, Teal, was yanking my chain. Nope! The dinghy was gone. At the edge of my night vision I could see the gray inflatable moving into the darkness. Not one to hesitate, I stripped to my underwear and dove in. My wife Blair, ever the resourceful one, beamed in on the dinghy with a flashlight. It was already 30 yards downwind and moving fast. As I churned through the water, I could only remember the advice of the *British Virgin Island Cruising Guide*: “Never swim at night.” And they weren’t talking about phantom jellyfish.

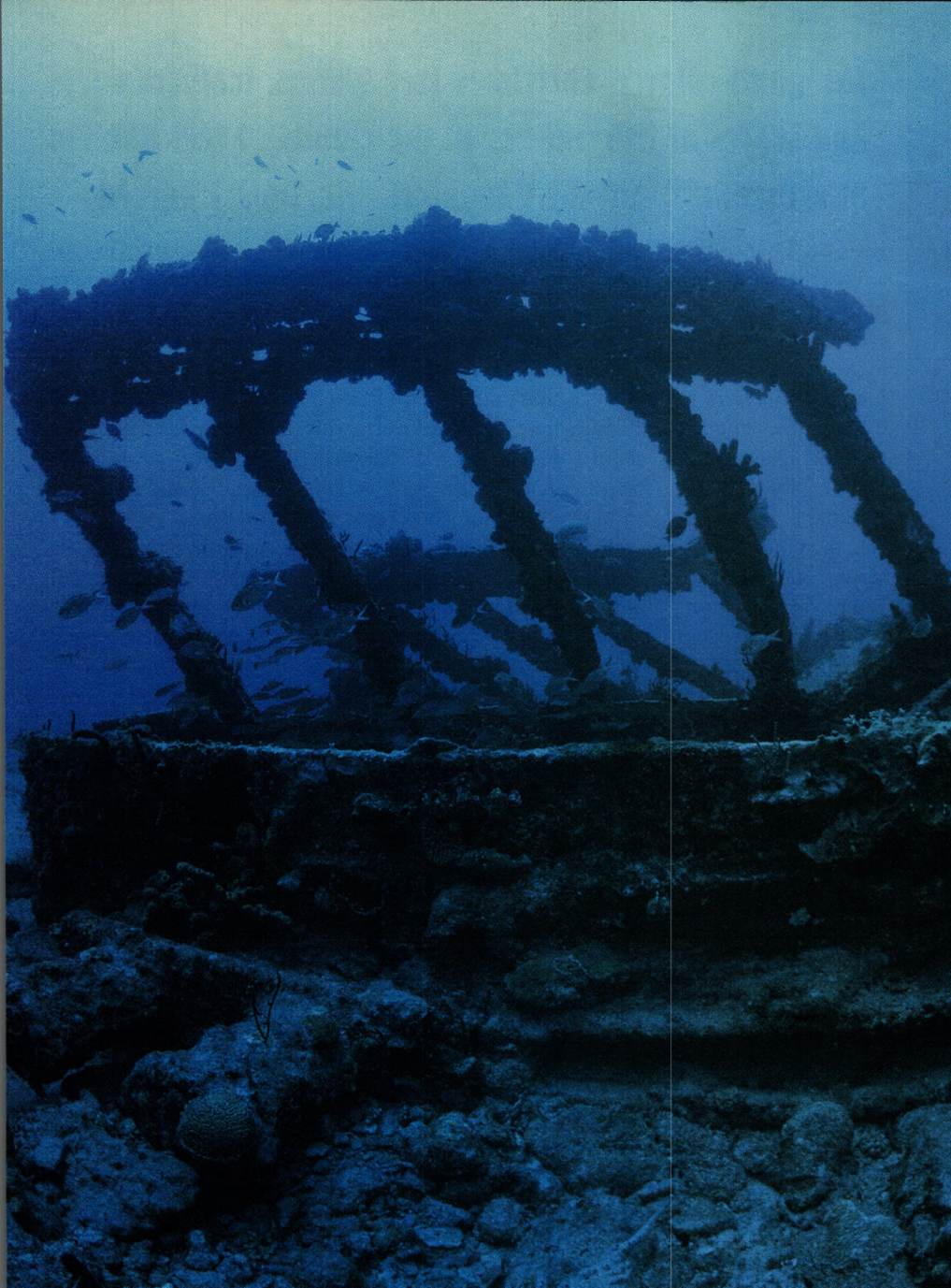
And, I had another problem. As soon as I hit the water, my undies slipped to my ankles. Then, suddenly, they were gone. I don’t think I’ve ever felt quite so vulnerable as that night, fully exposed to the creatures that lurk in the dark and deep. Believe me, I was motivated to reach that boat! Every few strokes, I’d get a visual on the dinghy and Mark Spitz-it as hard as I could. Several other boats heard the commotion and assisted with their flashlights as well. After what

seemed like a half mile, I was near exhaustion but finally caught the rubber dinghy and flopped into it like a limp rag, with at least four spotlights glaring off my flour-white bum. With my final shred of strength, I pull-started the engine and putted back to the boat.

I’d like to blame my wife or daughter for their sub-par knot tying. But I had tied the dinghy, and paid the price. My family suffered only mild embarrassment. Believe me, they’re used to it. Just another misadventure of my life in paradise.

We had signed up for a family adventure. Not just diving, but sailing, diving, snorkeling, rock climbing, beachcombing, exploring and naked dinghy chasing. So far, so good. A couple of months earlier, I’d hooked up with the Moorings, the international sailboat charter company, with bases from the Bahamas to Polynesia to the Mediterranean. We settled on the British Virgin Islands because the sailing is phenomenal, the snorkeling is better, and the diving is diverse. You won’t find the sheer walls like Cayman, Belize or Bonaire, but the BVI provides enough good diving and clear water to satisfy most bubble





The wreck of the *Rhone*.

fish with blue spots and....” Well, you get the picture. If it sparked an old veteran like me, you can imagine the charge it sent through a 6-year-old. And that was just snorkeling. She’s not ready to join us on the dives. But it won’t be long.

If the thought of spending a week on a boat turns you green, there are first class, land-based resorts scattered around the BVI. One of the most spectacular is on Virgin Gorda at Little Dix Bay, with its stunning private beach and golf course. Or, if boating is your preference and you want a really BIG vessel, you can book with the world’s largest trimaran, the 100-plus-foot *Cuan Lam*, famous for its top-notch live-aboard diving operation. The advantage of the *Cuan Lam* is that it covers the whole island chain, which is exactly what we did on our own private boat.

Commonly called bareboats, there are several companies with a fleet for charter. You can go fancy with a captain and a chef, or, if you trust your boating skills, go solo. As it turns out, the term bareboat ain’t what it used to be. The only thing bare out there was me after a dinghy. These boats are fully stocked. Ours had auto pilot, GPS, cell phone,

The great part is that it’s all so close and so easy. The *Rhone*, used as the set for underwater scenes in the movie *The Deep*, is still surprisingly intact after 135 years.

junkies. As a total destination, it’s top shelf. And there’s no better place for your child to learn the love of snorkeling. Before the trip, Teal had made a few laps in Mommy and Daddy’s bathtub. By the end of the week, we just did our best to keep up.

“Aaaaa,” she’d babbled into the snorkel, “ook ad adt boo iss.” Translation: “Wow, look at that blue fish.”

And she got an eyeful every day. We saw a bunch of turtles, two schools of squid, an Eagle Ray leaping from the water, plenty of barracuda, tons of pastel parrotfish, some Peacock Flounder, lobsters, a free-swimming Spotted Moray Eel and hundreds of, as Teal would say, “blue fish and yellow fish and black fish and purple fish and fish with yellow stripes and

refrigerator/freezer, outdoor grill and, most importantly, all the bath and kitchen goodies. We weren’t forced to spend a fortune on salt, pepper, mayo, toilet paper, dish soap and stuff we’d use for a week, then leave for the maid service to take home. It even had Tabasco, charcoal, zip-bags and Tupperware. Ooo la la.

Besides stunning beaches, gorgeous water, extremely friendly locals and quaint beach communities, part of the charm of the BVIs is the isolation. There’s no major airport and the islands are thinly populated. They’ve only recently been hit with cruise ships, and those are the small ones. It’s possible to fly into Beef Island on hopper flights via Puerto



The multi-colored Christmas Tree Worms, featherdusters and scores of fish put her in the clouds. "I feel like I'm in a dream," [said my daughter]. "Me, too," I agreed.

Rico, St. Thomas and a few other near isles, but probably the easiest itinerary is landing in St. Thomas, then jumping on a ferry to Tortola. St. Thomas handles big jets direct from New York, Atlanta, Houston, etc., then there's ferry service galore. Once you're on your boat, you have the freedom of Columbus, with a lot better food.

Our water-based mobile home was the *Soul Healer*. Ironically, we arrived the day after Easter, so we'd already been working on our souls for a day or so. Made in the USA by the French company Beneteau, the boat was cushy enough for the most dedicated couch potato. Even though there's no air conditioning, we ran the fans all night and stayed cool, even tucking under a blanket most nights.

Having sailed the Caribbean on my own boat in a past life, sailing is in my blood. But it had been so long since I had lived aboard that I'd lost that pure feeling of riding-the-wind freedom. The heck with Iran, Iraq, OPEC and all the oil pushers. Wind power is the ticket, baby. We were in control of our own destiny. And, there was the therapy of lying back in the cockpit of a sailboat with the wind keeping us cool and

the sun gently browning our skin. The stress simply evaporates as you slide silently through the water. That is, if you're sailing in a place as perfectly laid out as Sir Francis Drake Channel. In sailing lingo, the channel is all line-of-sight navigation and easy enough for Teal to handle. You see an island you like, you point toward it, then sail or motor there. About 20 miles long and 3 or 4 miles wide, the channel is defined by about a dozen major islands that roughly form an oval and help to minimize the wave action. But there's still plenty of wind to whisk you wherever your heart desires.

When we arrived in Tortola, we spent the first night on the boat in the Moorings marina. At first blush, we were tempted not to leave. In addition to a couple of hundred shiny new monohulls and catamarans ready for action, they have a pool, restaurant, hotel and grocery store, all on site. It's a clean, modern facility with plenty of friendly, helpful folks. That kicked our trip off with the right vibe. After provisioning with the essentials—rum, limes and ice—we finally dragged Teal out of the pool and blasted out of the harbor. A 15-knot eastern wind pushed us across Sir Francis Drake in about an hour. By early afternoon we were anchored in Little Harbor on Peter Island and snorkeling the shore reefs. Teal's first experience was like magic. The multi-colored Christmas Tree Worms, featherdusters and scores of fish put her in the clouds. "I feel like I'm in a dream," she told me. "Me, too," I agreed.

We picked Little Harbor because we'd gotten plenty of advice before the trip. We consulted with folks who'd been to the BVI, we read the *BVI Cruising Guide* (a must read) and we studied the charts (which have all the good anchorages marked). Little Harbor wasn't part of the mainstream and



Skin Diver GUIDE • The British Virgin Islands

GETTING THERE: There are no direct flights to the BVI from the U.S. or Canada. The easiest way to get there is to fly to San Juan, Puerto Rico or St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., and continue to your destination via inter-island flights or ferry service from St. Thomas. American Airlines, Delta and US Airways have direct flights from several U.S. destinations to St. Thomas and St. Croix. Most flights from Europe connect via Miami or San Juan before flying on to St. Thomas.

There's a U.S. \$10 air tax when leaving the British Virgin Islands. **BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS**

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round. The rainy season is September through December;

the driest is January through March. Water conditions are calmest April through August. Peak tourist season

is December through April. Hurricane season is September and October. **Topside Climate:** Winter 73 to 82°F;

summer 79 to 88°F. **Water Temperature:** On average, winter 72°F; summer 86°F. **Exchange Rate:**

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of the BVI. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time plus 1

hour. No daylight-saving time. **Live-aboards:** Trimarine Boat Company

(Cuan Law) (800) 648-339 www.bvidiving.com **Dive**

Operators: (Tortola) Aquaventure Scuba Services (284)

494 4320 www.aquaventurebvi.com • Baskin In the Sun (800)

650-2084 www.baskininthesun.com • Blue Water Divers (284) 494-

2847 www.ultimatebvi.com/bluewater • Prospect Reef Resort (800)

356-8937 www.prospectreef.com • Underwater Safaris (800) 537-7032

www.underwatersafaris.com (Virgin Gorda) Dive BVI (800) 848-7078 [\[bvi.com\]\(http://bvi.com\) • Kilbride's Sunchaser Scuba \(800\) 932-4286 \[www.come.to/bvi\]\(http://www.come.to/bvi\) **Resorts:** Leverick Bay Resort](http://www.dive</p>
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(800) 848-7081 www.virgingordabvi.com • The Bitter End Yacht Club (800) 872-2392 www.beyc.com **RESOURCES:** BVI

Tourist Board, Tortola (284) 494-3134 www.bviwelcome.com • Lonely Planet Guide to the BVI www.lonelyplanet.com • Moon Handbooks www.moon.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com



only a handful of boats were there—a nice departure from some of the larger harbors, like the Bight on Norman Island, where you can find up to a hundred boats.

From there we took a general counter-clockwise course that most of the boats follow. Norman to Peter Island; Peter to Cooper; Cooper to Virgin Gorda and so on. Along the way we snorkeled and dove all the hot spots. The Indians at Norman Island, the wreck of the *Rhone*, the Seal Dogs, George Dog and more. The great part is that it's all so close and so easy. The *Rhone*, used as the set for the underwater scenes in the movie *The Deep*, is still surprisingly intact after 135 years. We had a fair current, which can get stiff from time to time, but it's a must see. The same is true of the 245-foot *Chikuzen*. It was planted there by dive operators and has garnered a plethora of marine life. It's also one of the few places you'll find pelagics in the BVIs. Because it's in unprotected waters, the wind has to slow down considerably in order for you to get there comfortably.

Our dive guide on the *Rhone* was Joe Giacinto, owner of Dive BVI. Joe's a New York transplant who has been in the BVIs since the 1970s. With a base of operations in Virgin Gorda and satellite shops in several other locations, Joe can handle land-based divers or bareboaters throughout the BVI. With bareboaters, the big thing is rendezvous diving.

"Rendezvous diving is great but has some limitations," Joe explained. "People will call us one afternoon from Norman Island and say, 'I want to dive the *Rhone* in the morning'. Unfortunately, it's just too far of a run from there.

"It's best to check the dive operator's schedules before the trip," Joe said. "Then you can be sure to dive the *Rhone* or *Chikuzen* or whatever when an operator is scheduled to go there. Also, bareboaters will have the best luck if they're nearby a particular dive site rather than calling from the extreme reaches of the island chain."

In addition to expert dive guiding, Joe also led us to one of the Caribbean's best restaurants, Chez Bamboo on Virgin Gorda. I didn't feel bad about indulging on lobster curry and filet mignon, because we'd spent about six hours that day snorkeling among the mystical boulders at the Baths.

For all the BVI has to offer, the Baths are the *creme de la creme*. Set under a cloudless sky that day, the Baths were

"Ook ad adt boo iss!" Translation: "Look at that blue fish!"



stunning just to look at. Underwater, though, Teal was instantly transformed into the Little Mermaid exploring Ariel's Grotto. The boulders form hidden caves and pools that you can spend hours investigating. In fact, we had so much fun we spent two days there and decided to forgo a trip to Jost Van Dyke.

We ended our adventure off of Marina Cay, a post-card perfect island with an excellent restaurant and bar with a spectacular view. It was a fitting place to complete our adventure, and an easy down-wind sail back to the Moorings dock in Roadtown harbor. On the final morning, as the sun crept up and I brewed a cup of coffee, Teal hopped up on deck and yelled down to me. "Daddy, the dinghy is missing!" "Crap," I muttered, spilling hot coffee down my leg and bumping my head as I stumbled up the companionway. When I looked out, the dinghy was tied securely to the stern. "Just kidding, Daddy," she giggled. "Gotcha!"

I shot her the cooked eye and slunk back into the cabin. In just six days, she'd become an expert snorkeler and a pretty damn good jokester. Yep, I was truly a proud papa. 🐟



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One Cou Two

Text and Photography by
Georgienne Bradley and Jay Ireland

Pacific and Caribbean Costa Rica differ greatly.
(Left) An idyllic reefscape found approximately one
mile from the Caribbean coastline. (This page) The
lush rainforest of Carrillo National Park.

ntry, Worlds

Strapped into a secure harness, I dangle precariously from a rope strung between two massive trees. Through a thick layer of mist, I scan the 360 degree canopy vista. Vegetation, lush and green, surrounds me. It is this pinnacle of the Costa Rican rainforest that teems with life. Layers and layers of kitchhiking mosses, epiphytes and other plants that prevent light from penetrating to the barren floor below. As a result, 90 percent of all rainforest life exists in the canopy—an area most visitors were unable to visit, until recently.

Breathtaking. Violating my own rule, I look down.... This is a big mistake. At 100 feet above the forest floor I feel fear. No, I think terror is a better term.

The thrill and adventure of Costa Rica is not limited to her phenomenal underwater opportunities....Nowhere else in the world provides more to do in such a small geographic area.



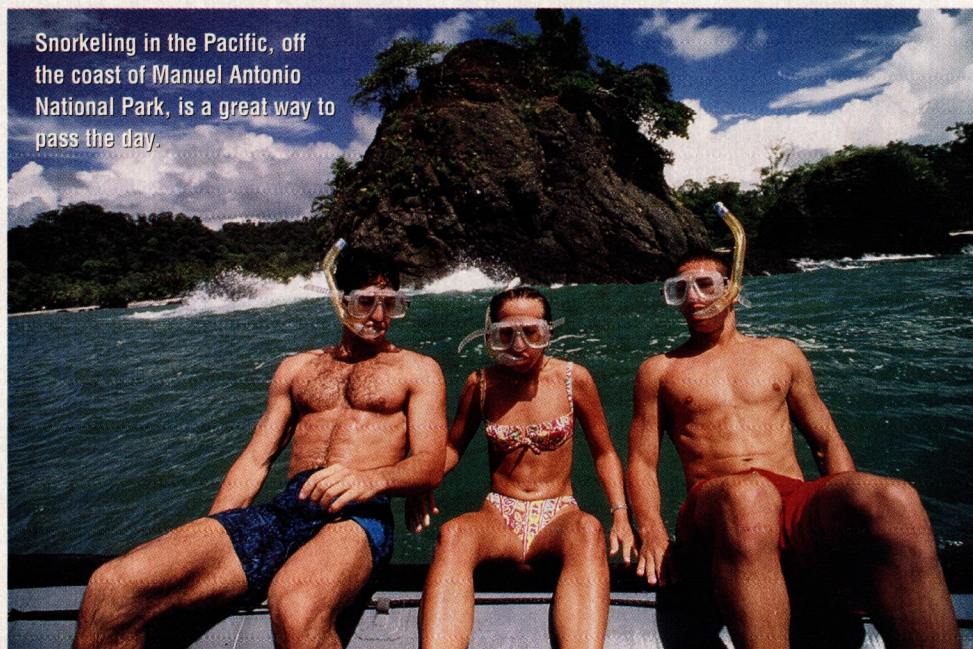
Frogs are the unofficial ambassadors of Costa Rica.

Why am I “hanging out” in Costa Rican treetops on the first day of my scuba vacation? Why not? The thrill and adventure of Costa Rica is not limited to her phenomenal underwater opportunities. It is a mistake to visit this country and not investigate some of the

land adventures as well. Nowhere else in the world provides more to do in such a small geographic area. Here you will find the quintessential eco-vacation where you can combine scuba, rafting, kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, exploring and more.

Costa Rica is a thin stretch of isthmus

sandwiched between Nicaragua and Panama, and well known to travelers for its amazing eco-adventure opportunities. Here divers can sample the gentle diving of the Caribbean, the large pelagics of the Pacific and still reserve time to sample some amazing terrestrial biodiversity.



Snorkeling in the Pacific, off the coast of Manuel Antonio National Park, is a great way to pass the day.

The volcanic “Cordillera Central” divides alluvial Caribbean lowlands from the Pacific beaches. Scuba diving experiences on the Pacific and Caribbean coasts are radically different. The largest diving draw of Pacific Costa Rica is the immense schools of fish and large pelagics. These animals are drawn to this area by the consistent nutrient rich upwellings that occur along the coast.

There is a wide range of diving destination options for visitors to the Pacific side. On this trip I opt to go to Playa del Cocos—one of the oldest diving hubs in the

country. Here, there are several dive operators and destinations from which to choose. I am most eager to visit the Murciélagos or “Bat Islands.”

After arriving at the dive center, we load up the gear into our panga and make our way north along the coast, until we reach the Bat Islands. I am hoping to see a Bull Shark. I have never encountered one, and have been told that these large predators are frequently spotted patrolling these waters.

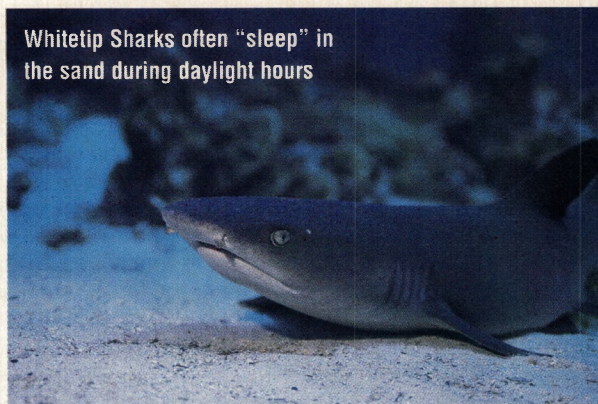
I backroll into pure blue and kick straight down to the reef. The fish take refuge from the constant current by hiding in the rocky crevices. I look off onto the sand flats and spot a school of Eagle Rays. The school is large and I quickly move in for a closer look. By the time I get there, the rays disappear but that’s okay, as I’m mostly preoccupied with my shark hunt. In my search, I come upon several sleeping Whitetip Sharks. At about 5 feet in length, these large fish are common to these reefs. These are one of the few shark species that can continue to breathe while not moving forward; they use a muscular gill pump to bathe their gills with oxygenated water as

they rest on the bottom. My bubbles eventually awaken the trio and they saunter into the blue. Still no Bull Sharks appear.

I start my ascent and join several other divers at 10 feet for a safety stop. There, we are all awarded with a spectacular show. Out of the blue swims a 6-foot sailfish. Headed straight toward our group, it veers at the last moment and flares its massive dorsal fin. It swims several figure-eights, each time thrusting its large dorsal fin upwards as it comes about. Perhaps the sailfish realizes we are not a threat; perhaps it just gets bored. Either way, it eventually swims off. Before hoisting myself into the panga, I look into the dark abyss beneath, certain I just missed the large Bull.

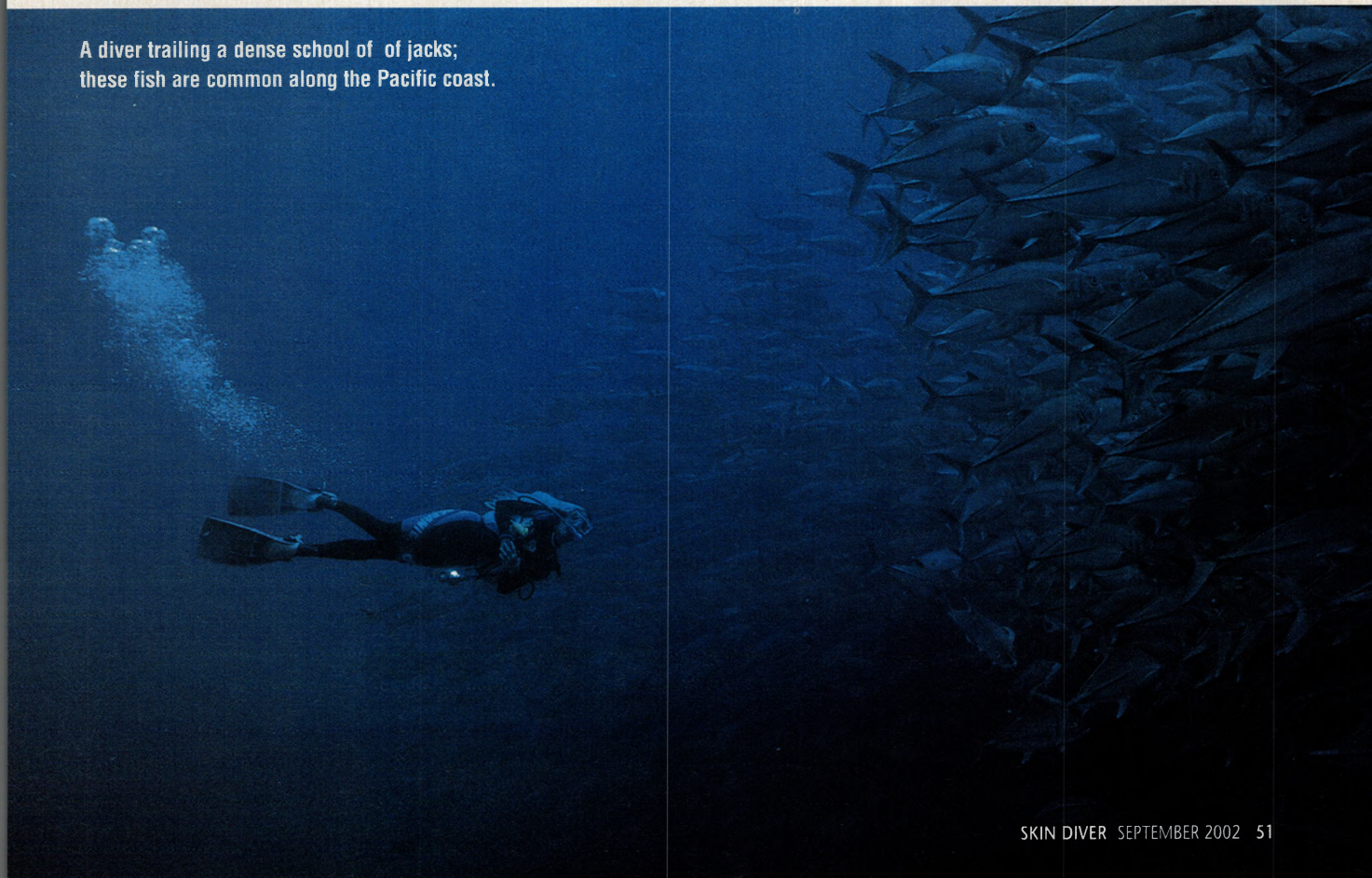
Although it’s possible to drive from the Pacific to the Caribbean coast within hours, I choose to spend a few days meandering through the countryside. Costa Rica is Central America’s model of stability, geography and bio-

Whitetip Sharks often “sleep” in the sand during daylight hours



The largest scuba draw of Pacific Costa Rica is the immense schools of fish and large pelagics. These animals are drawn to this area by the consistent nutrient rich upwellings that occur along the coast.

A diver trailing a dense school of jacks; these fish are common along the Pacific coast.



GETTING THERE: Almost all major U.S. carriers fly into San Jose (the capital), arriving at San José's Juan Santamaria international airport. International flights have a departure tax of around US\$17. There are two domestic airlines, SANSa and Travelair, and a regional airline, TACA Regional Airlines. It's also possible to travel overland to Costa Rica from the USA, crossing Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. SANSa (011) 506-221-9414 www.tacaregional.com • Travelair (011) 506-220-3054 www.travelair-costarica.com

COSTA RICA FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Depends upon what you want to see.

The green season is lush and animal behavior is rampant in the rainforest. Unfortunately, this season also brings frequent showers. The rainy season lasts from May to December. **Topside Climate:** The average annual temperatures range from 89°F on the coast, to 62°F inland. The mountain regions can get much cooler. **Water Temperature:** Water temperatures average around 80°F. Frequent thermoclines cause this temperature to fluctuate. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 356.270 (Colones). U.S. dollar is easily accepted, especially in tourism centers such as the Gulf of Papagayo and San Jose. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 1 hour. **Live-aboards & Dive Operators:** Aguila de Osa (800) 948-3770 www.central-america.com • Bill Beards Diving Safaris (877) 853-0538 www.diving-safaris.com • Ocotal Beach & Resort (011) 506-670-0321 www.ocotalresort.com • Resort Divers of Costa Rica (011) 506-672-0106 www.resortdivers-cr.com • Rich Coast Diving (800) 4-DIVING www.dive-costarica.com • Mario Vargas Expeditions (011) 506-670-0351 www.divexpeditions.com **Resorts:** Ocotal Beach & Resort (011) 506-670-0321 www.ocotalresort.com • Hotel Don Carlos (011) 506-221-6707 www.doncarlos.co.cr **RESOURCES:** Tourism Board (800) 343-6332 www.tourism-costarica.com



A snake sticks out its tongue, while sunning on a bromeliad.

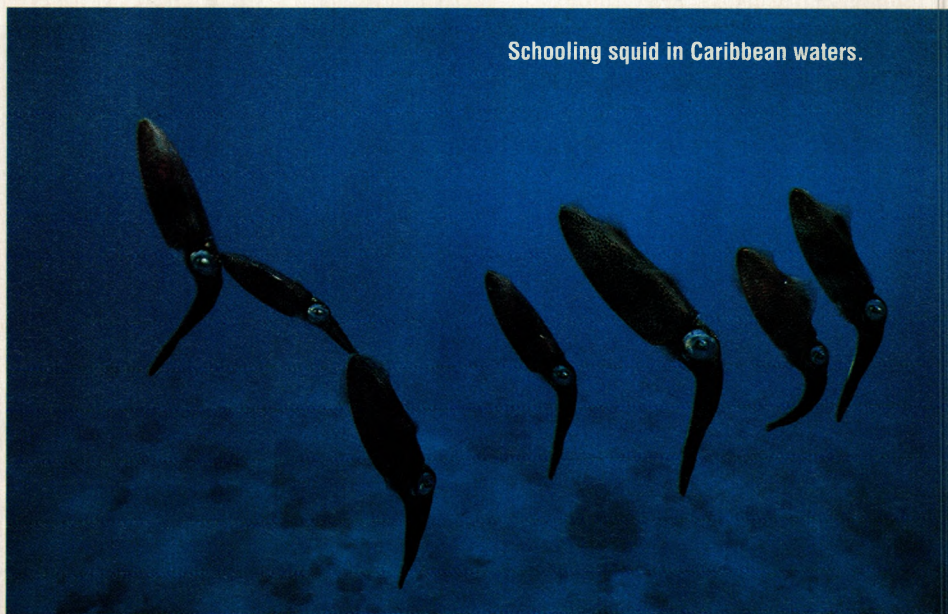
Whether you decide to dive, snorkel or stay dry, Caribbean Costa Rica is not to be missed. The lack of an advanced road system means the area has remained pristine.

diversity. The country's center is fortified with land spectacles and adventure. At 12,533, Mt. Chirripo is Costa Rica's highest peak, and no more than 50 miles from either coast.

The country also boasts a 90 percent literacy rate. The country abolished their army years ago, and instead diverted government money into the most sophisticated educational program in

their aid. Costa Rica has also invested in her future in other ways. Strong tourism programs have developed, and one time poachers and hunters now lead tours as naturalist guides.

The majority of Costa Rica's main roads are paved and if you stay on these main transport arteries, it is difficult to get lost. However, getting lost is one of the best ways to get to know any coun-



Schooling squid in Caribbean waters.

Central America. This amazing undertaking was made possible through the "Reciprocal Assistance Rio Treaty." This agreement ensures that any attack on Costa Rica would be considered an attack on the entire Western Hemisphere; all pact members (including the United States) would race to

try. With that in mind, I set off to experience some of Costa Rica's diversity—organic and not.

San Jose sits in the "Meseta Central." Here, the high elevation keeps temperatures relatively cool. About 70 percent of the country's population lives here. Pizza Hut, KFC, galleria malls and multiplex

theaters are found everywhere. The local penchant for exploiting car horns can get the better of visitors. Currently clogged with vehicles, San Jose's narrow streets were originally designed for carriages, not the enormous automobile traffic it experiences today. But it is a great place for setting up tours, as the city is the hub of all major roadways and the logical launch point for most expeditions. Mine would be a solo trek to the Caribbean coast.

Costa Rica's Caribbean reefs are still extremely unexplored. Scuba diving this area requires determination and a large dose of pioneering spirit. The region's dive operators seem to come and go. Over the last 10 years there has never been any guarantee that scuba hopefuls would be able to find local equipment and support. Knowing that I might dive virgin sites, makes it worth the inconvenience of bringing my own gear from San Jose.

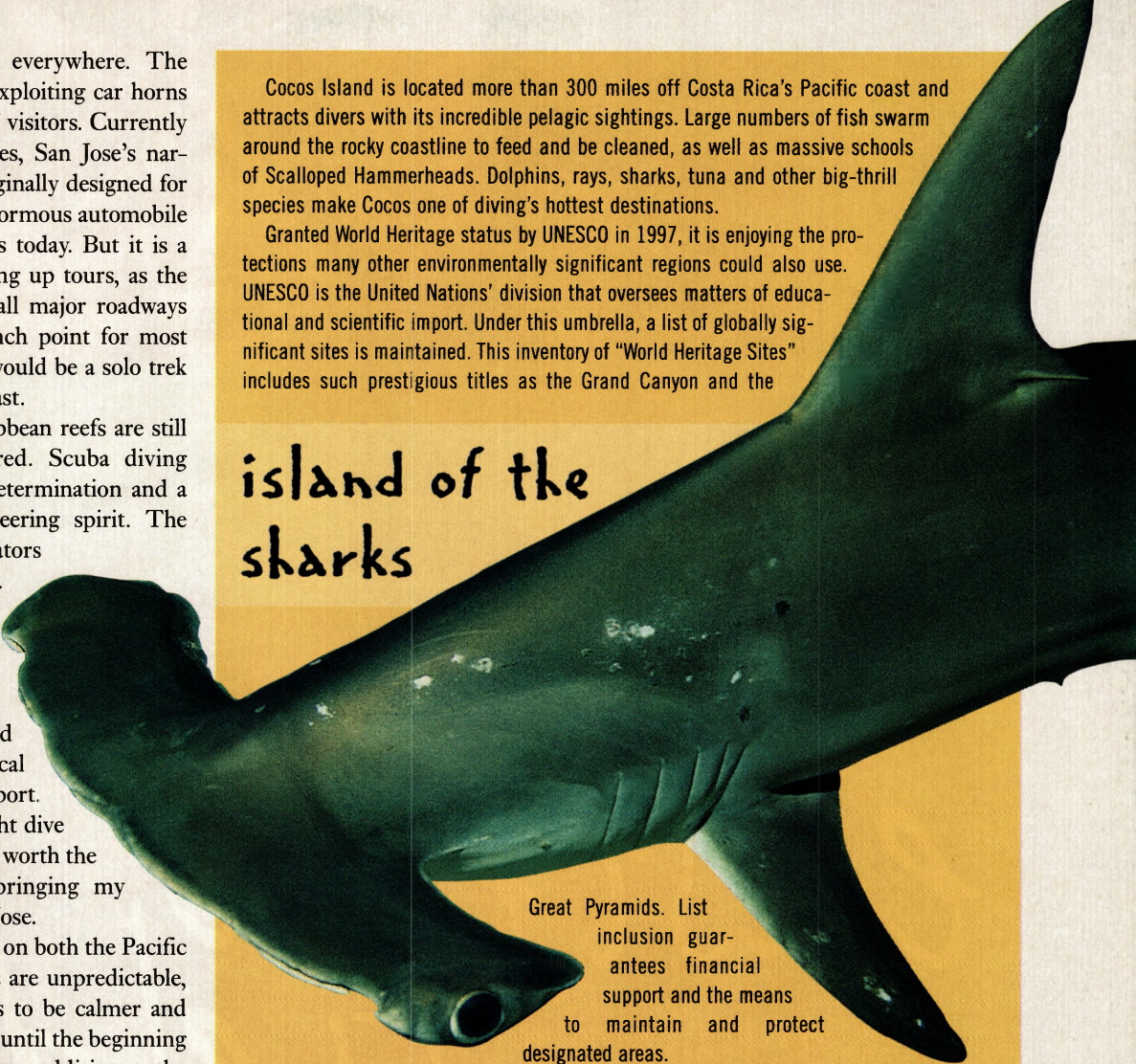
Although the seas on both the Pacific and Caribbean sides are unpredictable, the Caribbean tends to be calmer and clearer from August until the beginning of November. In addition, the Caribbean coast is very shallow. Most sites can be easily accessed while snorkeling, and can be great places to visit with non-divers who are interested in sharing the underwater experience.

I maneuver my rental car to a beach a few kilometers north of Puerto Viejo and pull off the main road onto a narrow dirt path. After lugging my gear across the white sandy beach, I search the clear waters for clues of the best point of entry. I wade out and snorkel for a few minutes, before I spot a series of portals through the reef, in-and-out holes that command investigation. Decorating the periphery of these entryways are small sea fans and sponges. On one of the fans, I see a delicate Flamingo Tongue and several crimson brittle stars. I continue exploring the lattice and find a sleeping turtle dozing on one of the underwater ledges. He seems undisturbed even when I swim close; he opens one

Cocos Island is located more than 300 miles off Costa Rica's Pacific coast and attracts divers with its incredible pelagic sightings. Large numbers of fish swarm around the rocky coastline to feed and be cleaned, as well as massive schools of Scalloped Hammerheads. Dolphins, rays, sharks, tuna and other big-thrill species make Cocos one of diving's hottest destinations.

Granted World Heritage status by UNESCO in 1997, it is enjoying the protections many other environmentally significant regions could also use. UNESCO is the United Nations' division that oversees matters of educational and scientific import. Under this umbrella, a list of globally significant sites is maintained. This inventory of "World Heritage Sites" includes such prestigious titles as the Grand Canyon and the

island of the sharks



Great Pyramids. List inclusion guarantees financial support and the means to maintain and protect designated areas.

Although admission is competitive, Cocos Island was accepted based upon several factors. Located on the Cocos Ridge, it is bathed by a variety of oceanic currents. Water temperatures, as well as flora and fauna, range widely, making Cocos Island a living biological laboratory. Cocos is the only place in the world where these disparate species coexist. —ANDREA PETERSON AND GEORGIANNE BRADLEY

For more information, visit www.unesco.org/whc/heritage.htm.

eye, then returns to his slumber.

Whether you decide to dive, snorkel or stay dry, this side of the country is not to be missed. The lack of an advanced road system means the area has remained pristine. It is the proverbial "real" Costa Rica.

The national parks are largely unvisited and the surrounding lands remain undeveloped. This is the home of many of Costa Rica's star animal species, including gentle three-toed sloths and brilliant red-eyed tree frogs. Guest homes and hotels in the countryside are few and far between. I always stay at the Aviarios del Caribe Bed & Breakfast, about 6 miles north of Cahuita National Park. This

sanctuary combines a wildlife refuge with a quaint bed and breakfast. Located at the mouth of the Estrella River, this is a great opportunity for visitors to observe a successful animal rehabilitation program. For those wishing to relax, the second floor wraparound balcony is a great place to spot birds and other wildlife. Tours of the mangrove canals reveal the face of yet another ecosystem.

Above and below water, Pacific and Caribbean, Costa Rica is a hotbed of biodiversity and adventure alternatives. The great mystery, and the great pleasure of this country, is how it can be home to so many worlds. 🐟



Neon-blue damselfish find shelter in hard coral.



A tiny lobster rests among the arms of a crinoid.



at play in the eastern fields

Life Erupts from a
Volcano's Grave in
the Coral Sea

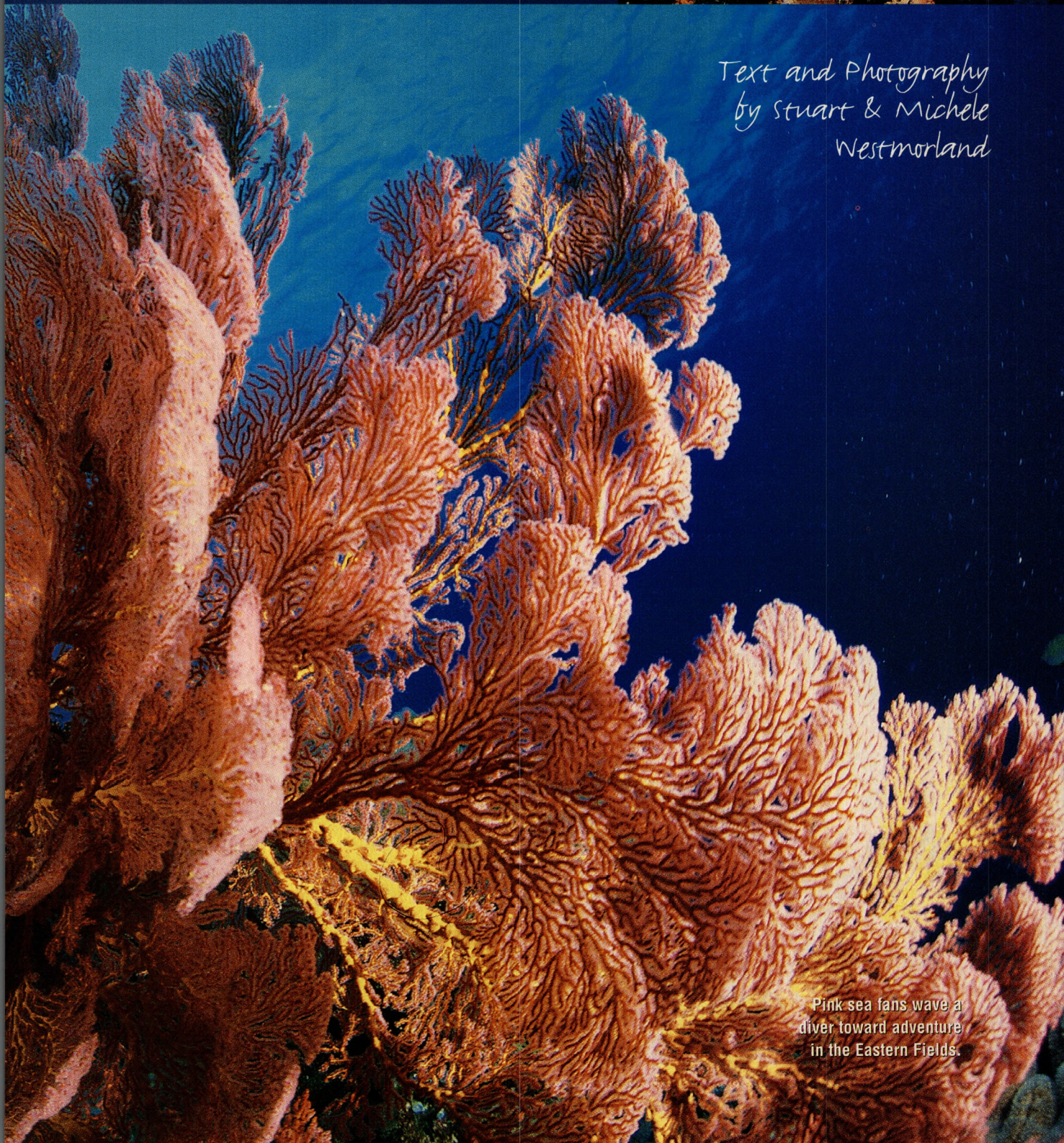
There is only one boat, the *Golden Dawn*, that comes to the Eastern Fields, and a brief weather window limits visits to only a few charters per year. Currents, winds and weather must be favorable to make the 10-hour overnight crossing. It's an adventure each and every time the boat leaves Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, with the hope of spending a week in these waters. The pay off is best described in the name of one of the area's dive sites: EMMO. This odd acronym is short for the names of four sections of the site: Eenie, Meenie, Minie and Moe. There is simply no other way to decide which site to dive other than to sing-song your way through a children's rhyme of chance. Each is positively mind blowing in its profusion of color and awesome marine life.



A Bronze Whaler patrols the open water.



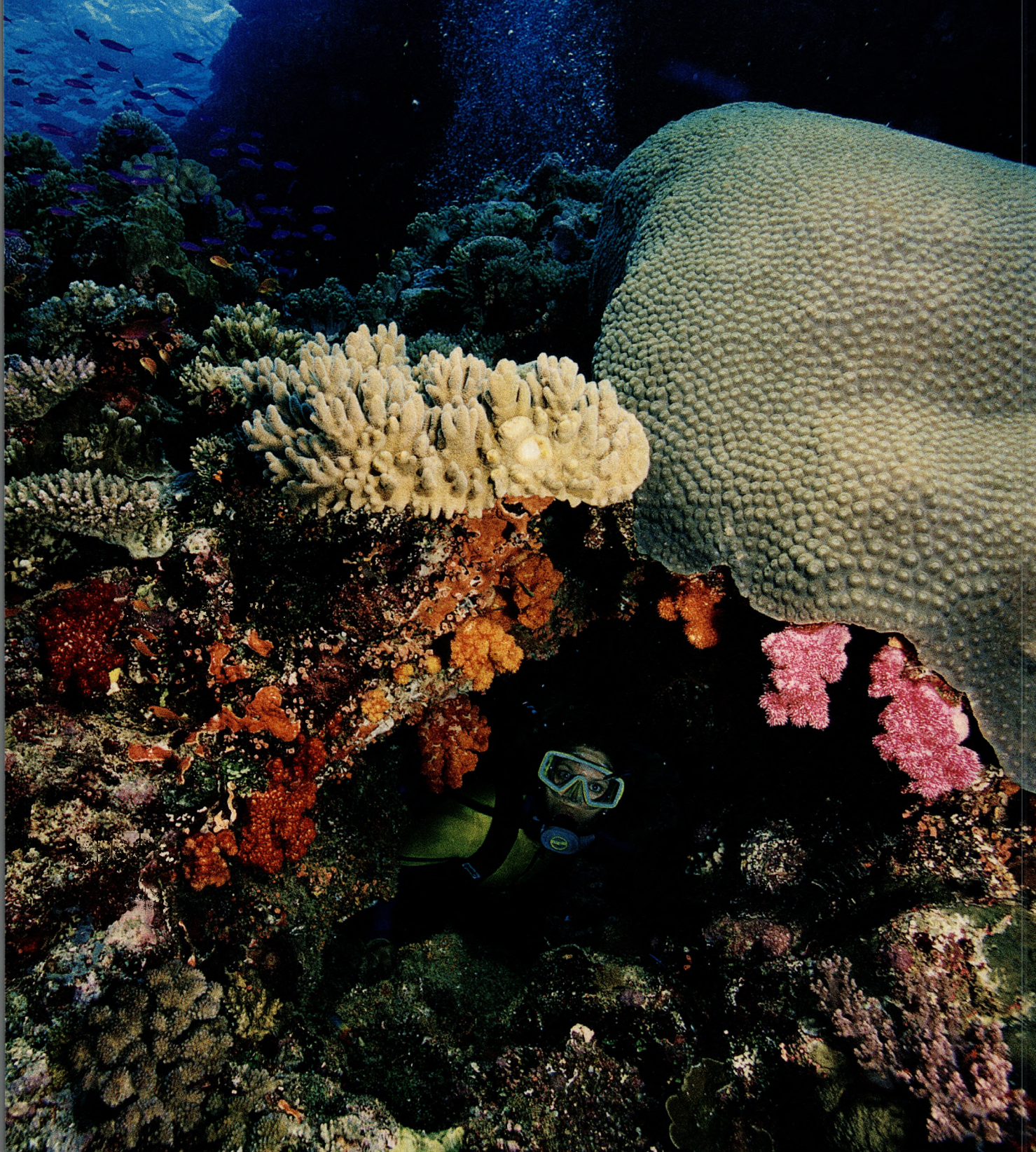
Soft corals crowd a wall.



*Text and Photography
by Stuart & Michele
Westmorland*

Pink sea fans wave a
diver toward adventure
in the Eastern Fields.

Even though we were only on our first full day of diving and had many more locations to visit, we agreed that this should be dubbed one of the underwater "Wonders of the World."





Skin Diver GUIDE • Eastern Fields



GETTING THERE: Point of embarkation for MV Golden Dawn is Port Moresby, PNG.

You can only get to the Eastern Fields on board the Golden Dawn. Fly Quantas/Air New Zealand through Australia, then Air Niugini/Quantas from points in Australia to Port Moresby. **EASTERN FIELDS FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Trips to the Eastern Fields are only available in November and December, then again in March.

Topside Climate: Tropical—hot and humid. **Water Temperature:** 80 to 84°F.

Exchange Rate: 1.00 (USD) = 2K (Kina). You can exchange at local banks and some operators may exchange. Major credit cards are easily used. Small villages take Kina only. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time plus 14 hours. **Live-aboards & Dive**

Operators: M/V Golden Dawn (011) 675-325-6500 www.mvgoldendawn.com **Resorts:** Loloata Resort (Only 25 minutes from Port Moresby, and a great place to stay for land-based diving.) (011) 675-325-8590 E-mail: loloata@daltron.com.pg (included in a variety of websites on diving in Papua New Guinea) **RESOURCES:** Tourism Promotion Authority (011) 675-320-0211 www.paradiselive.org.pg, E-mail: tourismpng@dg.com.pg

Secrets and Discovery

The Eastern Fields lie at the end of the world's largest reef structure—the Great Barrier Reef. Isolated by time, the remains of a volcano cover these 400 square miles in the northernmost section of the Coral Sea.

After a peaceful night's sleep crossing a gently rolling sea, we awake to the boat's namesake, a "golden dawn," at the entrance to the Eastern Fields. Rising 4,000 feet from the ocean floor, the reefs of the region attract many species of pelagic marine life. Converging currents and upwellings provide the perfect combination to bring in schools of Dogtooth, Yellowfin, Bluefin Tuna and Wahoo.

Craig, captain and owner of the *Golden Dawn*, has been exploring the Eastern Fields since 1989, and only began bringing divers here in 1993. Much of the area still remains unexplored, and Craig keeps many of the area's dive sites secret. Otherwise, all those wonderful schools of fish might wind up on plates in Asian restaurants.

One of the most impressive dives was at a site called Great Wall of China, a towering reef system that lives up to its name. This vertical wall had some of the most spectacular soft corals and sea fans we had ever seen. At 45 feet, the colors were blinding. Anthias, damselfish and Coral Grouper added to the kaleidoscope. Giant soft corals started to appear as shallow as 50 feet. Even though we were only on our first full day of diving and had many more locations to visit, we agreed that this should be dubbed one of the underwater "Wonders of the World."

Craig does his utmost to provide



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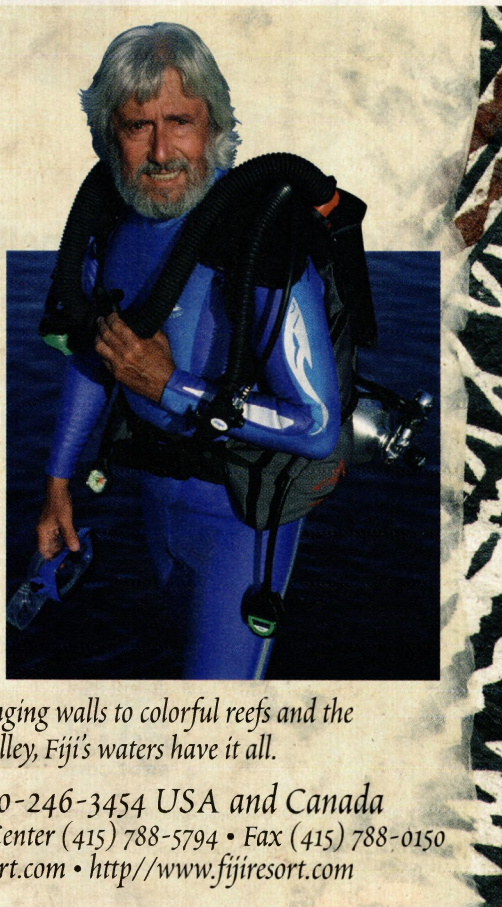
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Eastern Fields

divers with the means to maximize their experience. Besides five Drager semi-closed rebreathers, Nitrox is also made available to appropriately certified divers—a nice safety advantage when making four to five dives per day, as we would in this oceanic wonderland. He also likes to explore new sites. On our trip we would dive a fabulous virgin site, discovering monster sea fans between 60 and 90 feet deep, each fan covered with crinoids of all colors. Added to this were hundreds of Purple Anthias.

*Fire gobies by the hundreds
Giant Clams in topaz blue
ed the reef top; and neon
plethora of clownfish.*

On our second dive at this site, it was time to examine the smaller inhabitants. With loads of colorful crinoids, it was easy to discover delightful macro subjects. Clingfish and squat lobster resided in many of the crinoids and each tiny dweller bore the colors of its landlord. Blennies popped their heads out of small holes in the coral, curious what all the noise was about. There were at least 35 coral gobies on one sea fan alone, and Longnose Hawkfish were pairing up and hunting in the branches.

We also dived EMMO. Dropping onto "Eenie," we watched the terrain change at each foot of depth. Healthy hard corals, filled with small and colorful fish were next to large sponges and sea fans that seemed to increase in size and number as we moved down the steep slopes. On the slopes, near 100 feet—our attention was torn between the sharks cruising for prey, and soft corals of colossal proportions. Observing a Bronze Whaler Shark was thrilling, but it was the forest of soft coral that drew our full attention. Starting to show at a depth of 70 feet, these "trees" of the coral kingdom were cast in hues of red, yellow, pink and purple. Many of the giants easily exceeded 8 feet in height.

We were near the end of our diving when Craig pulled one last bit of magic out of his hat at Carl's Ultimate.

Discovered a few years ago, it is a dive that truly deserves "ultimate" in its name. Carl Roessler, the well-known underwater photographer, was on that first trip and very smitten by what he had seen. He was ready to declare mutiny rather than leave, after only having a single day to dive this exceptional reef.

Shaped like an arrowhead, when the current rips the action at the point of Carl's is remarkable. Bluefin and Dogtooth Tuna moved in to feed on the schooling jacks that, in turn, fed on the masses of baitfish. Sharks glided in, looking for their piece of the

*danced on the reef ledges;
and vivid greens decorated
anemones hosted a*



Anemone clownfish.

action, while overhead, hundreds of elegant Chevron Barracuda circled.

The slack tide on Carl's Ultimate provided time to investigate the miniature world. Fire Gobies by the hundreds danced on the reef ledges; Giant Clams in topaz blue and vivid greens decorated the reef top; and neon anemones hosted a plethora of clownfish. After five dives on this site, we still craved more.

Indeed, the remoteness of the Eastern Fields, and their location at the crossroads of such biologically rich currents, make this volcanic grave a wellspring of life. 🐟

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*For magazines mailed to subscribers only. Grand prize will include a first-time use payment of \$800. Each submission becomes property of *Skin Diver* magazine (photos will not be returned). *Skin Diver* is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions. Entries submitted without entry fee will be disqualified.



**TAKING A
 SPIN THROUGH
 TURTLE TOWN**

THEY USED TO CALL IT THE “DIME Store Turtle.” The Red-eared Slider. And it was usually the first introduction that most kids had into the world of turtles. The sliders were small, easy to find and could be cared for easily in a tank of freshwater. But lately I’ve noticed that these former kid favorites have taken a backseat in popularity to the giant sea turtles that roam the Earth’s oceans.

At every event I attend, at every school I visit, kids want to know everything there is about sea turtles. No offense to the Sliders, but it’s easy to see why these animals have caught the attention of the youngest generation. Weighing in at up to 1,400 pounds, sea turtles are truly among the most magnificent, beautiful creatures of the sea, with a story filled with more peril and adventure than any fiction writer could dream up. And what kid can resist that?

Right from the start, sea turtles fight the odds. They hatch, unprotected, on beaches around the world, then embark on a unique race for survival. After they dig their way free of their nest, they must orient themselves to the brightest horizon, then make a run for the sea. Too slow, and they face dehydration or become dinner for flocks of circling birds and roaming crabs.

Later, they’ll have run-ins with sharks, big fish and virtually any other predator with an empty stomach. And if, by some

incredible luck, they beat those odds, they face a lifetime avoiding trawler nets, tuna log lines, hunters and accidental ingestion of human garbage. Not exactly the simple life. In fact, you might say it’s enough to make the Red-eared Sliders’ lifestyle look like a weekend at Club Med.

Everyone likes to root for an underdog and, certainly, no animal qualifies for that like a sea turtle. Maybe that’s the attraction kids have to these animals. All six species of sea turtles in the United States are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. As a diver, encountering even a single sea turtle is always a fantastic experience. So you could imagine my excitement several years ago when I discovered what I could only describe as a city of sea turtles in my own backyard, less than a quarter mile from my home on the North Shore of Oahu, HI, near Haleiwa Harbor.

At the insistence of a dive buddy who wanted to show me a new “secret spot,” I grabbed my underwater camera and

Sea turtles—the “underdogs” of the ocean.



we walked down the beach. Offshore, I saw jet skis roaring across the water, then doubling back with dizzying speed. “That’s the secret spot?” I said.

My friend laughed. “None other.”

Needless to say I was skeptical as we entered the water and kicked out toward all the activity, dodging one craft after another. I had known the area

PHOTO: COURTESY WYLAND

harbored plenty of caves and lava tube tunnels, but I was completely unprepared for what I saw as we emptied our BCs and started to look around. Moving in every direction, like an afternoon rush hour, were more than one hundred sea turtles. Ironically, it seemed that the watercraft in the area provided a safe haven, scaring away predators, like Tiger Sharks, who are known for feeding on the turtles.

A very large male Green Sea Turtle greeted us almost immediately. This guy was very curious and seemed to know my friend. We followed the turtle down 40 feet to the reef, where at least

...sea turtles are truly among the most magnificent, beautiful creatures of the sea, with a story filled with more peril and adventure than any fiction writer could dream up. And what kid can resist that?

50 of these beautiful animals rested on top of a lava formation. None of them seemed bothered by the two strange-looking visitors. I supposed they figured it was only a matter of time before all the people rushing around up top started poking around below.

With so many turtles congregated in one place, it was easy to see their subtle physical and behavioral differences. Some were shy and swam off. Others were curious and tentatively approached us. And some, like our escort, were even friendly, inviting us to continue exploring their world. For 40 minutes the large turtle stayed by our side and guided us through one of the most fantastic journeys I have ever experienced.

In a way, I felt like a kid that afternoon. It was impossible not to. This was, with all due respect to the Red-eared Sliders, the ultimate turtle adventure. To be welcomed by these turtles on their own terms was an experience beyond words. But I know the next time I meet with a group of kids, I'm going to have to find a way to tell them about my afternoon in Turtle Town. 🐢

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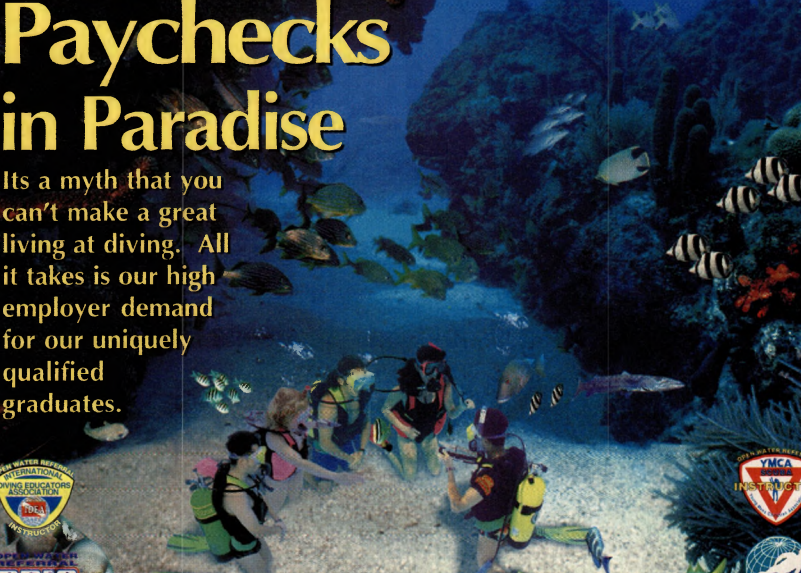


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If you ever need to make a wager on who knows the most about shipwrecks off Grand Cayman, put your money on Sergio Conconi, manager of Don Foster's Dive Cayman, Ltd. Not only is the Buenos Aires, Argentina-native an authority on locating the wrecks, he's also attuned to their history and demise.

"The ship's story is what grabs the diver and pulls him in," Sergio says, "and won't let go until he knows its past and explores its remains. They're all intriguing, but few surpass the *Balboa*."

Night descended on George Town Harbor, as first mate Gareth Ingram tied into the buoy that marks the boiler of the *Balboa*, Grand Cayman's "Gift from God." Its cargo of lumber washed ashore when the 375-foot freighter sank in the harbor during a fierce hurricane in 1932. The captain, lugging a strongbox as he abandoned ship, vowed he would thank God and do something beneficial if no one perished in the disaster.

Making good on his promise, the captain used the salvaged funds and lumber to build a church on the waterfront, which was clearly visible next to the illuminated George Town business district, less than 300 yards from our dive site.

As we dropped 30 feet to the sandy bottom, our lights revealed scattered wreckage, a result of detonation in 1957 when the harbor was cleared by engineers to increase ship traffic. The *Balboa* is a night dive for the same reason, as cruise ships and other vessels make it a hazardous daytime descent.

The night shift—nocturnal fish decked out in an array of bright colors—emerged from beneath hull plates and iron fastenings. Someone's beam picked up an octopus, a night stalker gliding across an anchor chain. A Spiny Lobster, its eyes glowing like coals on sticks, foraged for crabs, snails and clams. A translucent pink cardinalfish swam out from beneath an anchor that was so covered with coral and tube sponges we could barely tell what it was. A green parrotfish, asleep in a cocoon

of mucous, nestled beneath the ship's mast. Fuzzy hard coral polyps, their tentacles fully extended, fed on plankton that drifted in from the debris field. A com-

"The ship's story is

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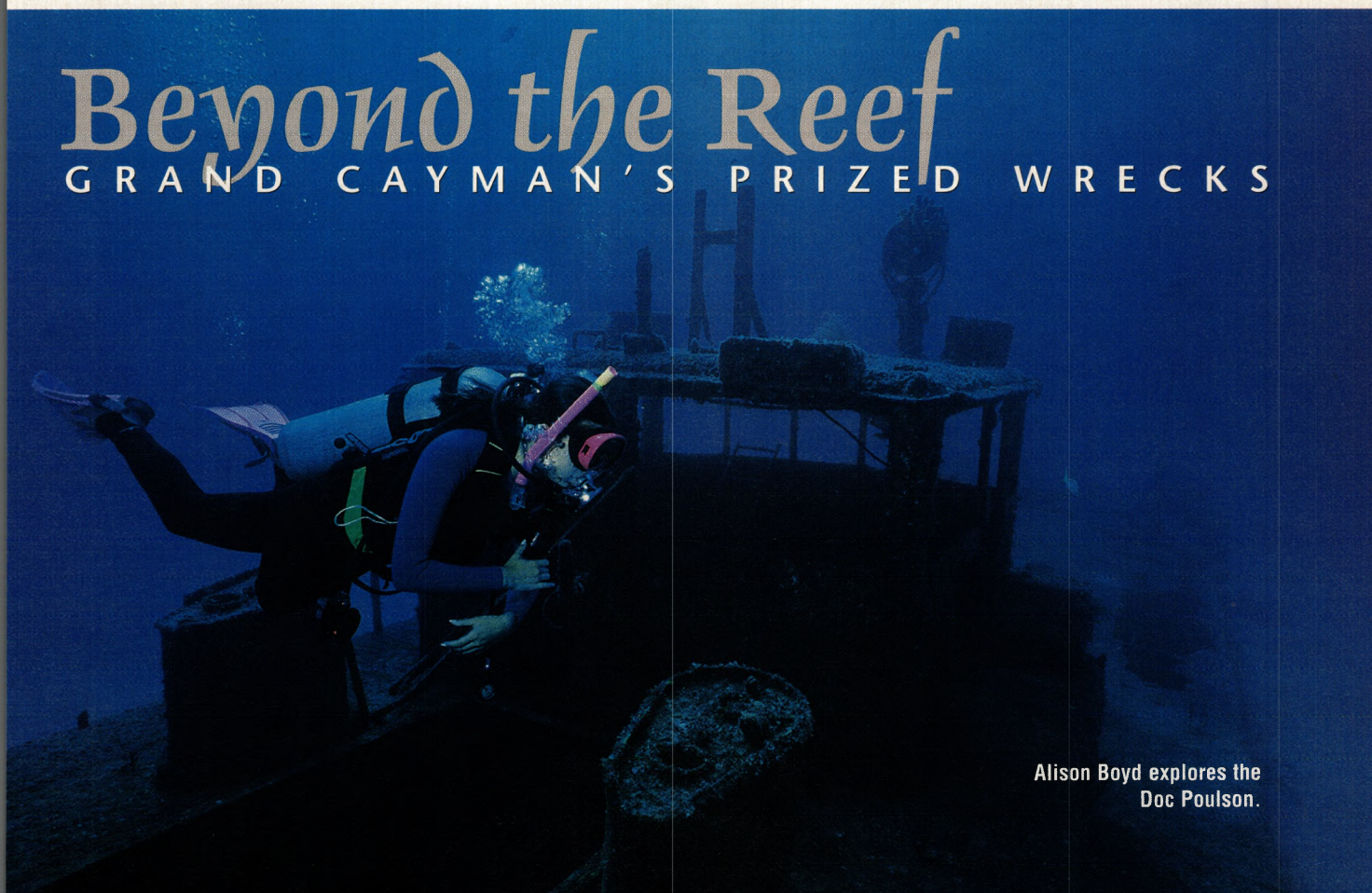
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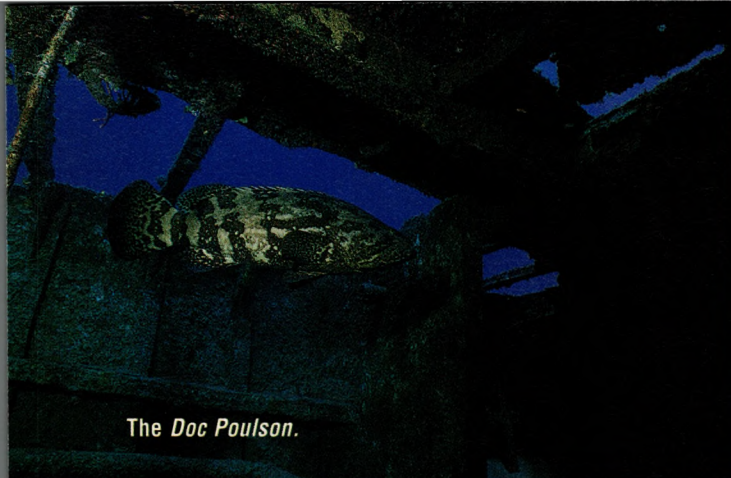
partment, one of the few fragments of wreckage rising above the sand, housed sponges, anemones and brittle stars. When Sergio pointed to the beacon light hanging beneath the boat, we knew it was

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the signal to end the dive. As we headed back, our fins created an underwater fireworks display of bioluminescence; a fitting end to an impressive dive.

Grand Cayman has a full menu of diving for every appetite. The deep-water tek crowd migrates toward the *Carrie Lee*, a 130-foot-long freighter that capsized in 1986 off the north end of the island and sank in 240 feet of water. In contrast, the whole family can snorkel in 6 to 8 feet of water on the *Pallas*, located between South Reef and the shore. This 150-foot Norwegian freighter is beat up, but provides a great wreck experience that few people know about. And, there are many, many more.

Bounty of Wrecks

The *Doc Poulson*, a small island cargo ship, was just as impressive. As Gareth led the way, my daughter, Alison, and I followed him into the forward compartment, where a 50-pound Goliath Grouper greeted us like shipmates. It showed no fear, nor did the Black Durgons, Blue Tangs and Schoolmasters that took refuge in the galley and stern.

The *Poulson*, one of several ships sunk close to Seven Mile Beach, sits upright, 50 feet deep, looking like a ship that's getting ready to sail. The remains of its searchlight, protruding high above the frames of the pilot-house, afford an ideal backdrop for shutterbugs.

Not far from the *Poulson*, off Galleon Reef, the *Oro Verde*'s remains are scattered in 60 feet of water. The 180-foot Panamanian freighter-turned drug runner (the ship's name means Green Gold in Spanish) ran aground in North Sound in 1976. Bob Soto and other



The Cali

dive operators purchased the salvage rights, stripped the hatches and sank it four years later. Today, only the bow remains intact. The rest of the ship collapsed years ago, when hurricane winds and tidal forces moved it 100 yards toward shore.

When we descended on the *Oro Verde*, we were met at the bow by French Angelfish and Stoplight Parrotfish that dined on algae growing on a deck winch, railings and capstans. Peering through spaces where portholes have been removed, my daughter and I spotted Nassau Groupers, Mutton Snappers and squirrelfish hiding in the shadows. A Trumpetfish hung vertically over a catwalk that lay exposed among the rusty remains scattered across the bottom. A barracuda, porgies and Blue Runners cruised the perimeter of the wreck, which was strewn with valves and other ships' fittings.

While the *Poulson* and *Oro Verde* are two popular offshore sites, the *Cali* and the *David Nicholson* are two favorite shore dives. The *Cali*, built in 1900 and named after a city in Columbia, South America, is only 100 yards offshore. Springing leaks while sailing from Ecuador to Cuba, the 206-foot-long grain carrier put in at George Town Harbor. Its cargo of grain and rice swelled when it got wet, causing rivets to pop at critical points on the hull. When the water pumps failed, the captain ran his ship aground on a sand patch right in front of what is now Don Foster's Dive Shop.



Sergio, in his dive shop

"Bottom time is staggering in these 20-foot depths, where the engines, boilers, masts, ribs, winches and superstructure plates create a feeling that you're on a real sunken relic."








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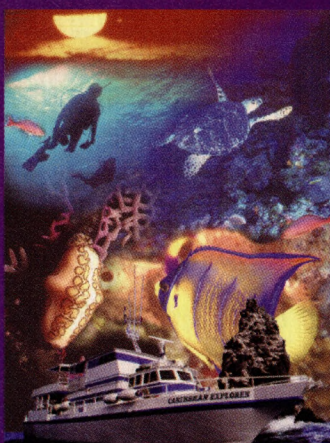
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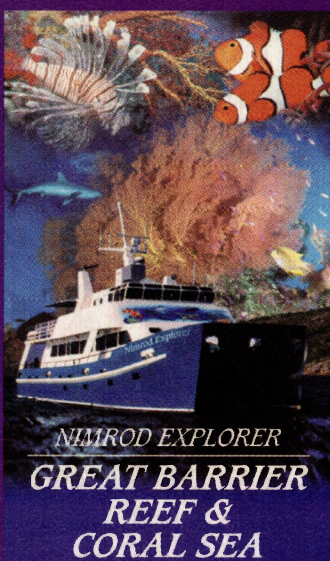
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Bottom time is staggering in these 20-foot depths, where the engines, boilers, masts, ribs, winches and superstructure plates create a feeling that you're on a real sunken relic. Sergio says, "Battered, yes, but historically significant. You don't find many four-masted sailing ships, later fitted with twin diesel engines, whose major parts haven't rusted away."

Agelis Sponges on the *Cali*, spread over star coral like spilled paint, attracted Queen Angelfish and Fairy Basslets. A Speckled Moray, Sergeant Majors and Bluehead Wrasses darted in and out of discarded conduits.

The *David Nicholson*, sunk in 1990 only 300 yards off Sunset House, is a 70-foot-long landing craft (*L.C.M.*) used for training dives. But it's also

fun for experienced divers. Cathy Church, renowned operator of a photo center at Sunset House, says divers like to penetrate the engine room of the *L.C.M.*, where chromis, hogfish, yellowtails and a host of juveniles of many species reside. The wheelhouse and engine are gone, but the craft sits upright in the sand, its drop-landing platform lying nearby.

The Treasure Mystery

Sergio also has a "secret" shipwreck site. On his day off, he took me to what looks like the remains of a treasure wreck. Sergio says that when he first saw it, he thought it was his retirement trove, but upon further investigation it proved to be a very old turtle schooner, one of many built on the shores of

Skin Diver GUIDE • Grand Cayman

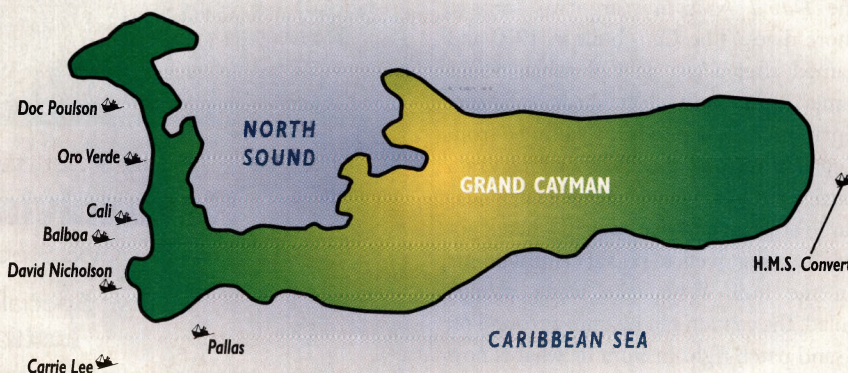
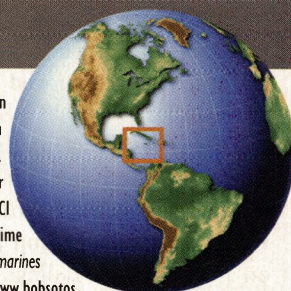
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Shipwreck buffs love the National Museum. Its exhibits, photos and archives account for many major shipwreck disasters off Grand Cayman.

nearby Cemetery Reef. A coral covered mound of ballast stones, ribs and metal bars—unfortunately none made of gold or silver—indicates a very old vessel, possibly from the Cayman Islands' turtle trade of the 1700s.

The remains of one of His Majesty's Fleet, historically documented as the Ten Sails, are off the East end of Grand Cayman, where nine merchant ships and the Royal Navy frigate H.M.S. *Convert* accidentally grounded in 1794. Dr. Margaret Denton, archaeologist for the Cayman Islands National Museum, combined surveying and excavation of the wreck site with research in England, France and Jamaica, to write a book, *Our Islands Past: The Wreck of the Ten Sails*. Her book, and detailed information on the Ten Sails, is available in the museum's gift shop.

Shipwreck buffs love the National Museum. Its exhibits, photos and archives account for many major shipwreck disasters off Grand Cayman. The archives reveal a Spanish treasure galleon route that by-passed the Cayman Islands on voyages from Panama to Cuba, the ships' final departure port for Spain. Although historical records have been located, there are few specifics of galleons sunk in the 17th Century on the area's dangerous Serranilla Banks. However, Spanish coins and cannons found off Grand Cayman throughout the years suggest that something valuable still lies beneath the sands of this remote archipelago.

Grand Cayman, shaped like a big claw, is grabbing more shipwreck divers every year. The funny part is, many don't want to escape its clutches when they learn that, at last count, 320 shipwrecks are listed in the area.

Special thanks to Cathy Church, Comfort Suites, Sergio Conconi, Don Foster's Diving Ltd. and Meloney Syms. 🐟



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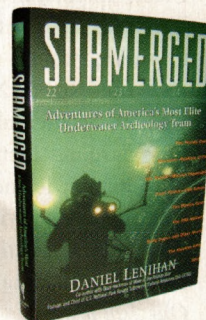
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BY RYAN ALLEN

DIVER'S
BY RYAN ALLEN

IN *SUBMERGED—ADVENTURES of America's Most Elite Underwater Archeology Team*, underwater archeologist Daniel Lenihan relays 25 years of diving, exploring, preservation efforts and rescue adventures of the National Park Service. Lenihan has been diving for the U.S. National Park Service as a park ranger and archaeologist for nearly 30 years. In 1976, he created the U.S. federal government's first underwater archaeological team, then was appointed the first chief of the Submerged Cultural Resources Unit (SCRU) in 1980.



In this memoir, Lenihan recounts the real-life adventures of the SCRUI. This award-winning unit of the U.S. National Park Service is composed of elite divers—historians, archeologists and photographers—with the mission of “surveying, mapping, investigating and protecting the shipwrecks and sites that constitute America’s sunken heritage.”

Covered are SCRU's explorations from 1975 to the present, ranging from the first expedition to explore and video the USS *Arizona* in Pearl Harbor, to surveying the Isle Royale shipwrecks in the chilled depths of Lake Superior, and others.

Lenihan is adept at explaining the present through the past, and bringing the depth of his moments underwater to the surface of the page. 

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Another upcoming Aggressor Fleet event will take place on September 28, 2002, when the luxury dive yacht *Tahiti Aggressor* sets off on her maiden voyage hosted by award-winning filmmaker Stan Waterman and legendary underwater photographer and author Jim Church. Throughout the seven-day excursion in Tahiti's remote Tuamotu Atolls, Waterman and Church will share their adventures and photo expertise with an audience of 16 scuba divers.

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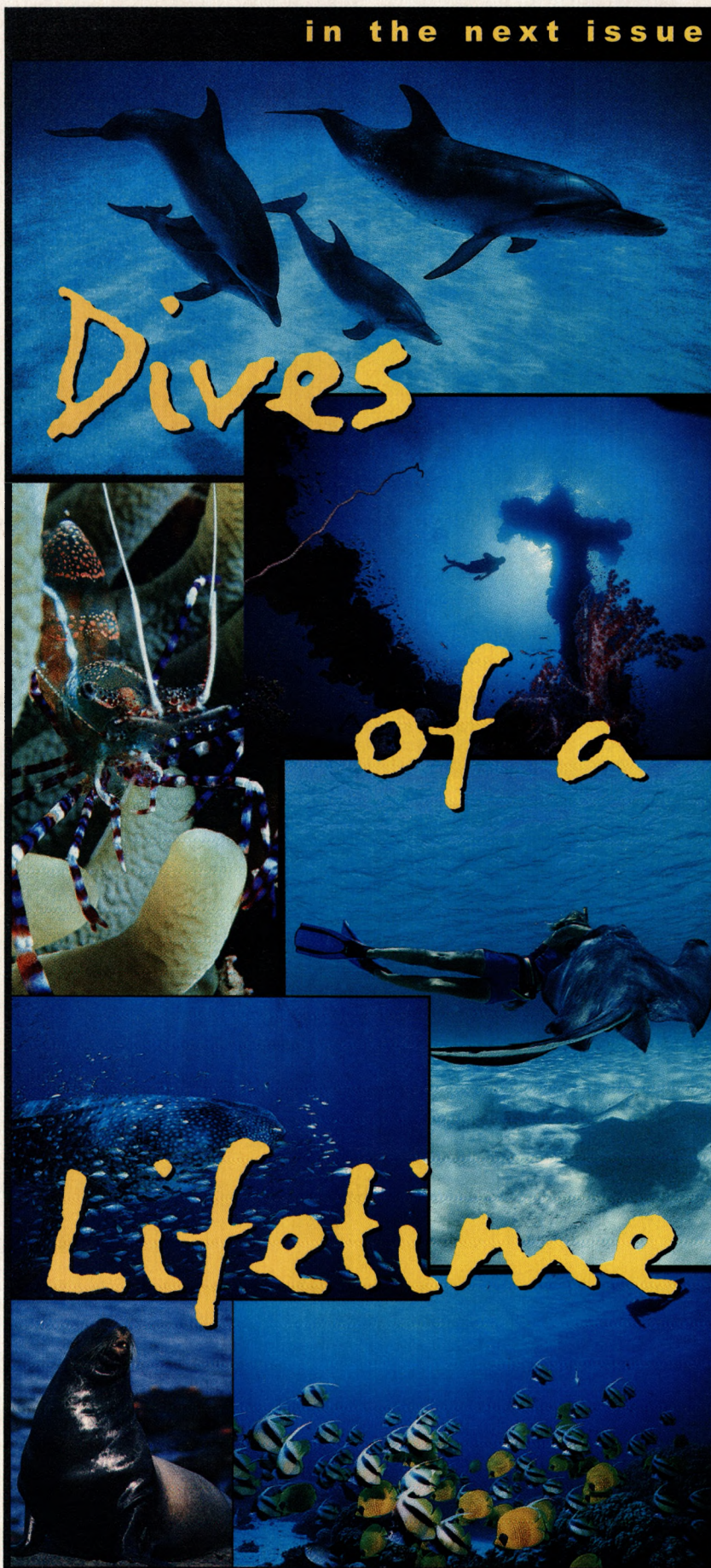


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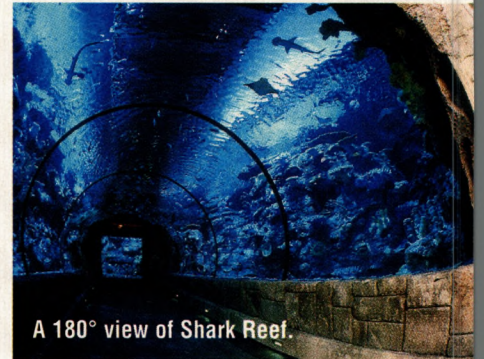
in the next issue



FREEFLOW

A Desert Ocean

LAS VEGAS USUALLY CONJURES up images of flashing lights and the always-present ring-a-ding sounds of slot machines. When you think of Vegas, the last thing you think about is water, but at Shark Reef aquarium in Mandalay Bay Hotel, you'll find plenty of water—1.6 million gallons.



The 90,560 square-foot aquarium opened up June 20, 2000, and employs 50 divers. The divers' main job is to clean the largest exhibit, Shark Reef, but they also observe and record the sharks' behavior. Wearing metal mesh dive suits, the divers have a 65 to 100 minute downtime at a depth of 24 feet. They can also interact with visitors by using special Dive-Com equipment, which allows the divers to talk to visitors, answering questions about the 15 different shark species.

Sand Tiger, Sandbar, Nurse, Lemon, Blacktip, Whitetip, Leopard, Bamboo, Port Jackson, Zebra, Epaulette, Bonnethead and Australian Marbled Cat Sharks share space with two Green Sea Turtles, snappers and jacks in the 360-degree view aquarium. Other exhibits include a touch pool, crocodile habitat, lizard lounge and sea jellies tank.

The Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre of Vancouver, Canada, manages Shark Reef, and with the help of engineering and designing teams, they were able to produce a filtration system, which produces the replicated seawater needed for the marine life housed at the aquarium. In some cases, 1.6 million gallons of seawater are filtered through the aquarium's filtration system every 30 to 90 minutes.

Shark Reef is so much more than an

PHOTOS: COURTESY SHARK REEF

aquarium—it's also a learning center. The facilities have education programs and field trips for students that include classroom activities and a guided tour. The programs are designed to educate children about marine life and the environment. The goal, according to Brian Robison, Director of Shark Reef, is to "enhance public awareness about the conservation of the ocean and tropical environments."

The aquarium is already expanding on awareness through research involvement. Currently, it is sponsoring a Green Sea Turtle off the coast of Costa Rica. The project tracks Mandy's (short for Mandalay) movement and is part of the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. The tracking system allows researchers to monitor these endangered animals and learn more about their migratory behavior so that they can be better protected.

When discussions of creating an ocean in the middle of the desert were started, somebody probably said, "What a losing bet." But Shark Reef has proven to be a better gamble than any slot machine; bringing roughly 1,000,000 visitors a year. Despite its daunting location, the aquarium has beaten the odds and educates visitors about our beautiful oceans and marine life, while also working toward preservation. 🐟 —Michelle Danner

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The aquarium boasts an outside exhibit as well.

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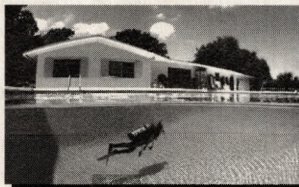


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WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME
Member Jennifer Carter is a prominent explorer, whose journeys have taken her to extraordinary heights and depths. Jennifer was the first woman to dive the RMS *Titanic* (she made the dive to 12,500 fsw in a submersible during the 1987 expedition, which she led), and she has also skydived from 12,500 feet (the two feats together established a world record).

Since 1972, Jennifer has worked as a cinematographer, producer and writer. She authored the book *Titanic Adventure* and produced the National Geographic films *The Sharks* and *The Great Whales* (Emmy Award, 1978). Jennifer also worked on an Al Giddings/Jim Lipscomb production,

CONQUERING THE FEAR FACTOR

the award-winning *Mysteries of the Sea*, and she produced "The Oceans," which was part of the Planet Earth series for PBS with the National Science Foundation. Jennifer's other projects include *Return to the Titanic*, *Titanica* and the IMAX films *Across the Sea of Time* and *Mark Twain's America*.

Throughout her 30-year career, Jennifer has done saturation, hardhat diving and scuba dived worldwide. While discussing her expeditions, Jennifer recently confided, "My work often entails dangerous and bizarre circumstances. For example, during an expedition to find the legendary Loch Ness monster, I had to go to a slaughterhouse and collect buckets of blood and innards to try out a theory that the monster might be a carnivore. One of my jobs on this production was to help change the film in stationary underwater cameras. Loch Ness has unusual conditions. Because of the lake's enormous amount of peat moss, in broad daylight, even in totally sunny weather, the water is pitch black within a few feet of the surface and dangerously disorienting. Needless to say, this made underwater photography extremely challenging!"

On another daring expedition—the filming of *Sharks*—Jennifer was inside a steel cage hand-feeding ravenously

PHOTO: RALPH WHITE

hungry sharks by holding out mackerel with her gloved hand. Suddenly, the trap door of her protective cage accidentally opened, and a large Blue Shark swam in, obviously tempted by the mackerel in her goody bag. Keeping her cool, Jennifer shifted her position as the angry shark lurched toward her, trying to find an exit. She knew that the best thing to do was to keep moving around smoothly.

"If you lie still, the shark will perceive you as dead meat," Jennifer explains. "If you thrash, it excites his sensory system and causes it to attack. I also knew that water conducted sound



Carter and the mission board for her *Titanic* dive.

five times as fast as air, so a loud noise could provoke the shark. I had to try not to bang my air cylinder against the bars of the metal cage. I was sucking up huge amounts of air from my tank, but luckily I was rescued in time!"

Jennifer, who is obviously no stranger to danger, attributes her nerves of steel to years of boot camp-style training.

"I felt that in order to extend my ability to operate in documentary film, I needed to not only travel as much as possible, but to challenge myself in anything I feared doing."

As a result, Jennifer became a Reserve Sheriff and went through one of the toughest courses she had ever experienced, working up to the position of Lieutenant over a period of many years. She also became a licensed skydiver and river runner, learning how to live in difficult conditions with no luxuries or modern conveniences. These days, when Jennifer isn't on an underwater expedition, she travels nationwide, speaking about National Geographic, IMAX and the *Titanic*. She was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame in 2001. —Hillary Viders, Ph.D.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT—Professional Underwater Models

MOST THINK THAT MODELING is a glamorous occupation. But most models are not strutting down runways in Milan and jetting to Paris at a moment's notice. For those that are not "supermodels," the job is a job and it has the same goal: a paycheck. And what it takes to get the perfect shot, as all underwater photographers will tell you, is skill.

What we see on the pages of maga-

zines is the final result. What takes place behind-the-scenes is a completely different story. The tasks are often detail-oriented, multi-faceted and physically draining. Most models work long hours, receive modest wages, continuously market themselves for assignments and have relatively short careers due to intense competition.

After considering what it takes to be a successful land model, try to imagine

Veteran underwater models Sherry Smith (left) and Michelle Cove diving with sharks during a catalog shoot in Nassau.



what challenges await a professional underwater model. Not only does underwater modeling require the same general attributes as those on land, it also demands advanced diving skills and athleticism.

Expert buoyancy control is essential. Underwater models need to consider the artistic, environmental and safety aspects of every movement. These models must be able to simultaneously focus on the photographer, subject, environment, their gauges and, of course, smiling (possible, but tricky with a reg in your mouth).

Underwater modeling also requires stamina, aerobic conditioning and muscular development. Attired in mask, snorkel, wetsuit, BC, regulator, octopus, gauges, tank, weightbelt, dive boots and fins, even beautiful and dedicated models can look like overloaded pack-mules out of the water. And, though temporarily free of the cumbersome weight while submerged, they may have to endure strong currents, surges and non-stop swimming during a shoot.

Without using "unfashionable" masks containing both a transmitter and receiver, verbal communication is almost impossible beneath the surface. Models must also rely on sign

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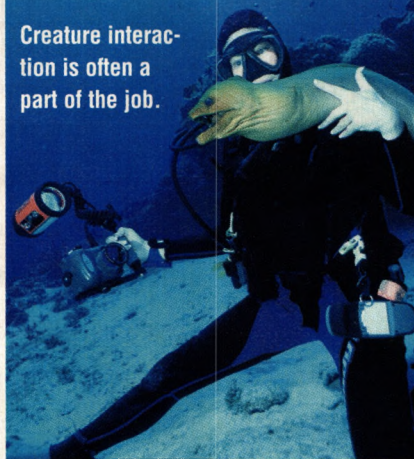
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language, gestures and most every random flailing of a photographer's arms, to communicate effectively underwater. Confusion can cost precious time, money and rare photographic opportunities. This makes teamwork and planning absolutely crucial.

Underwater models are also required to fully understand the targeted dive sites and area marine life. This includes any components that will be featured in the imagery and those that might prove to be potential hazards to the health of the team members. Animals, plants, structures (both man-made and natural) and other natural elements (currents, surges, thermoclines, etc.) must be taken into consideration prior to any dive. In terms of marine life, population numbers, behavior patterns and habitat zones are key factors. There are few things worse on a shoot than an allergic reaction to lionfish venom or severe flesh wounds because a model didn't allow a moray eel its personal space. Models always strive to work in harmony with the surrounding environment, not against it.

And, underwater modeling is not a full-time career. Dual careers are certainly the norm and many will combine underwater modeling work with land or studio modeling, acting, being

Creature interaction is often a part of the job.



a dive instructor, scuba equipment sales or jobs completely unrelated to the diving industry.

So the next time you watch a fashion show or leaf through a magazine or catalog, try to look beyond the staged image of the model. Imagine what takes place behind-the-scenes to bring the picture or event to life. This is especially true for underwater shoots and the underwater models who go below and beyond to get the job done.  —Sherry Smith & A. Scott Johnson

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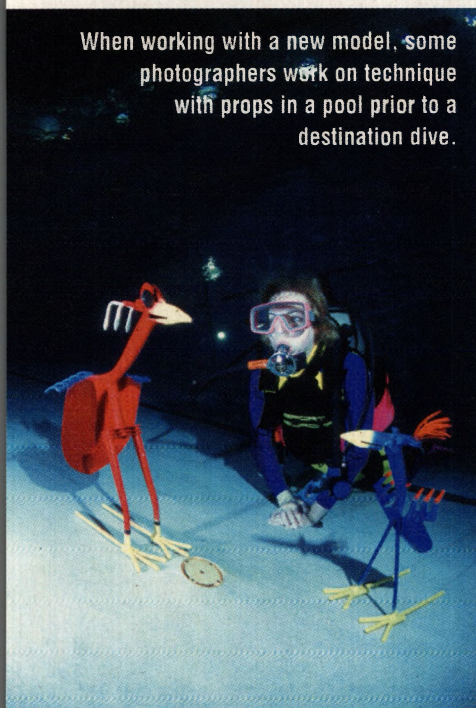
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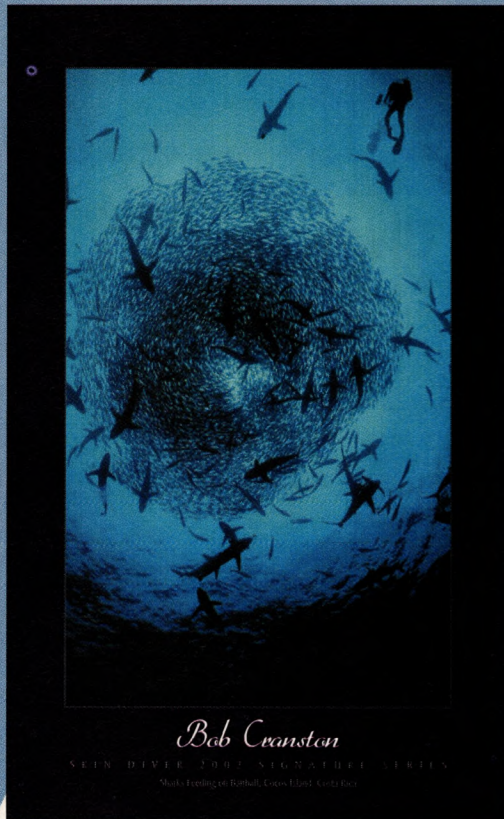
When working with a new model, some photographers work on technique with props in a pool prior to a destination dive.



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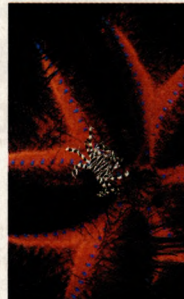
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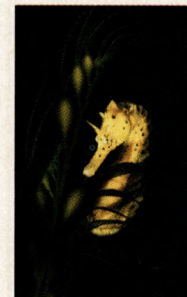
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Black Border • Released 6/15/03

JULY



David Doubilet
Black Border • Released 7/15/02

AUGUST



Roberto Rinaldi
White Border • Released 8/15/02

FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP



Chris and Monique Fallows
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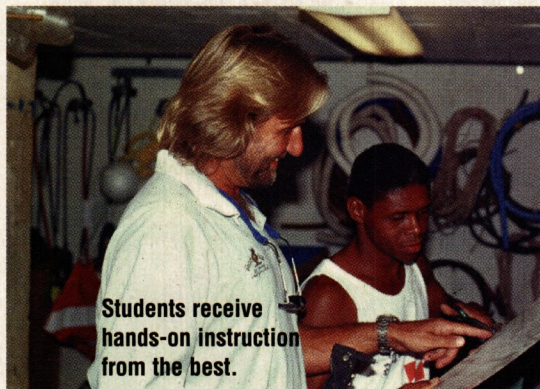
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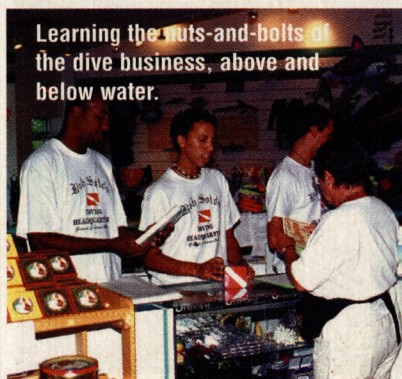
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2002-2003 SCHEDULE

2002

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September 16 to 29

October 21 to November 3

November 18 to December 1

INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT COURSE (IDC)

September 30 to October 7

November 4 to 11

December 2 to 9

INSTRUCTOR EXAM (IE)

October 8 to 9

November 12 to 13

December 10 to 11

RESORT PRO MANAGEMENT (RPM)

October 18 to December 18

2003

(Tentative Pending PADI Approval)

RPM: February 2 to April 2

Dive Master Plus: January 6 to 19 &
March 3 to 16

IDC/IE: January 20 to 27 &
March 17 to 24

IE: Jan 28 to Jan 29 &
Mar 25 to Mar 26

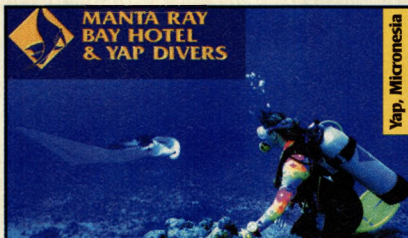
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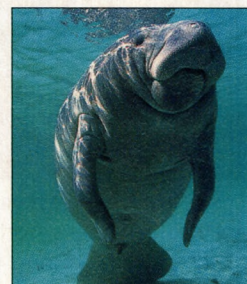
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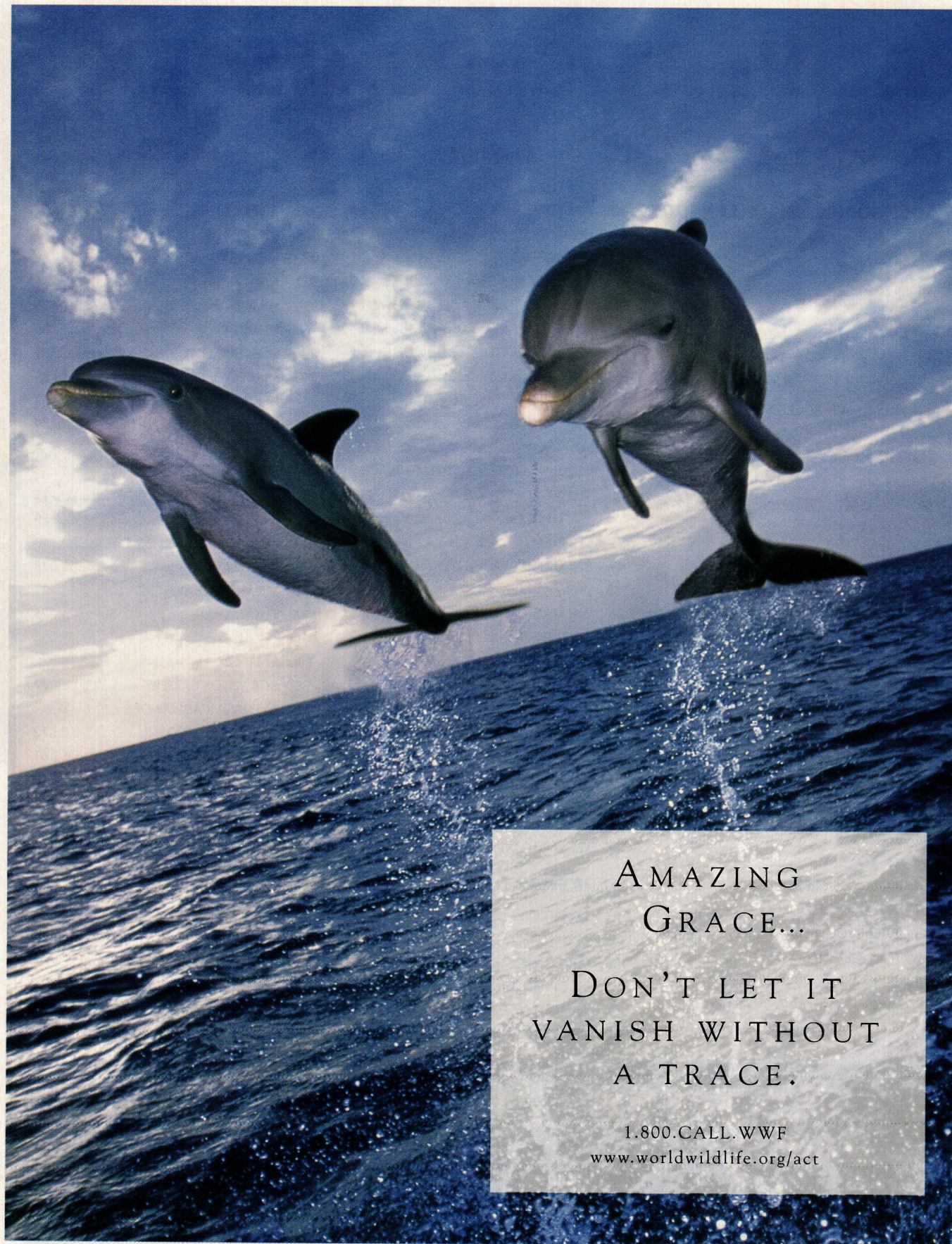
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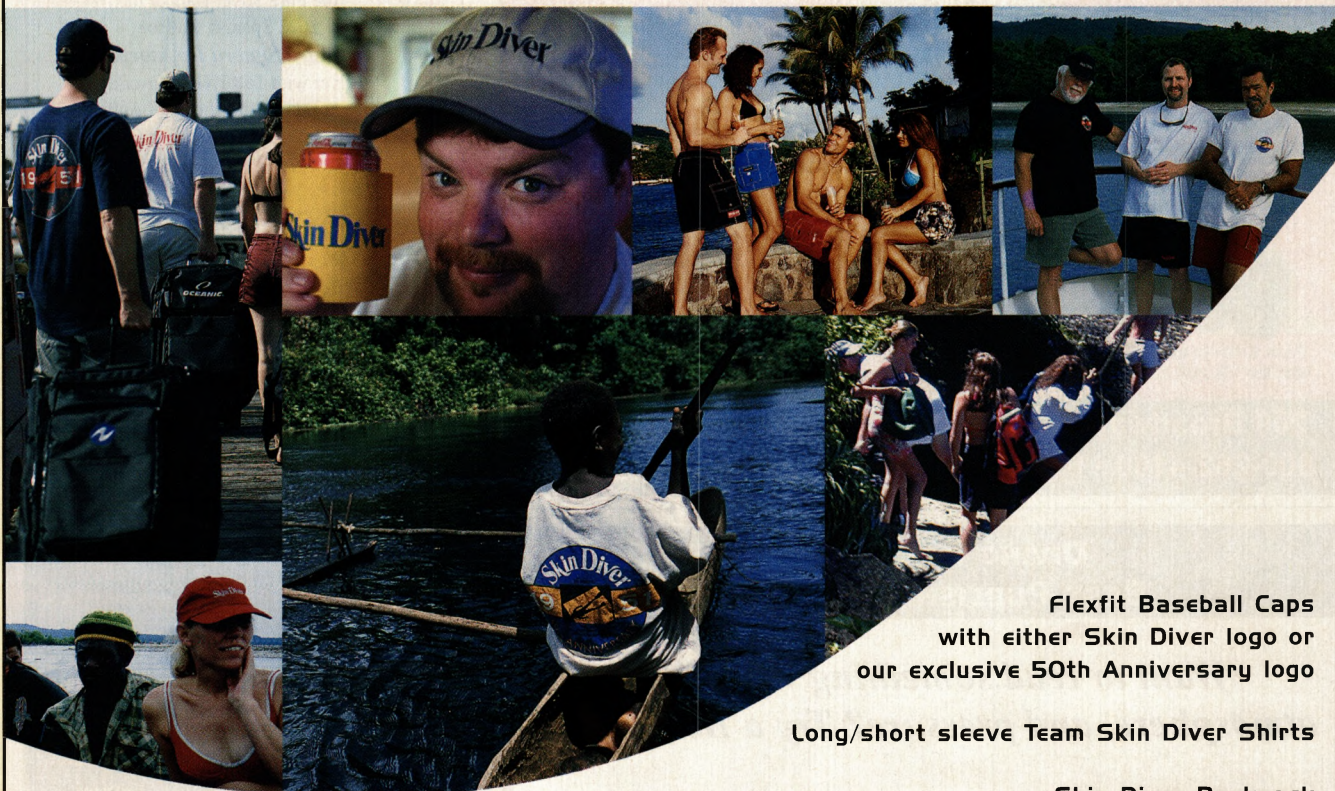
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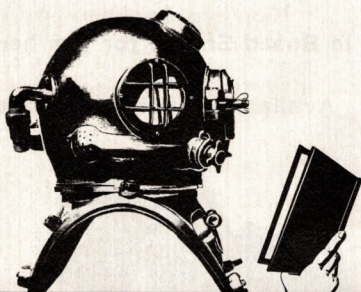


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A full-page advertisement for Dive Goddess. The background is a deep blue underwater scene. A diver is shown in profile, swimming towards the right. They are wearing a black wetsuit with vibrant, multi-colored patterns (red, yellow, green, and blue) on the legs and arms, referred to as 'Dynamite Skins'. The diver is also wearing a black BCD, a white air tank, a black mask, and a regulator. The text 'dive goddess™' is in the top left in a stylized, reddish-brown font. Below it, 'Dynamite Skins!' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, the website 'www.divegoddess.com' is displayed in a yellow, sans-serif font.

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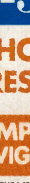
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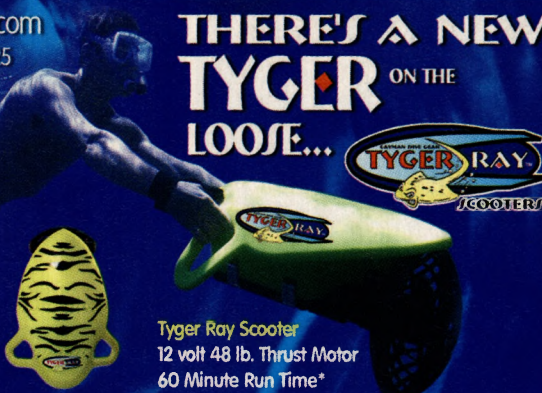
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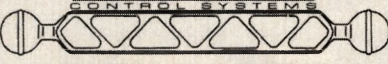
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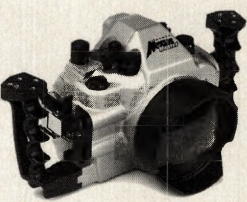
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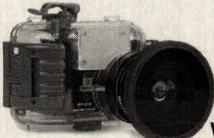


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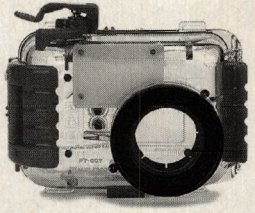
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When my friends and I started diving Baja in the early '70s, every trip was an expedition. We drove our decrepit trucks and vans, hauling inflatable boats, tanks, and compressors. Today, all we have to do is hop a jet and put ourselves in the capable hands of dive operators.

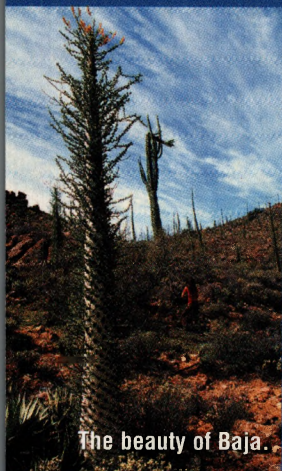
But, occasionally, there's a need to get back in touch with the real Baja. Sport utilities are now the vehicles of choice, taking much of the risk and some of the adventure out of off-road excursions. This time we were trekking into the mountains to view Indian rock art, four-wheeling on some of the notorious dirt roads, and communing with the whales in San Ignacio Lagoon.

CAVE PAINTINGS

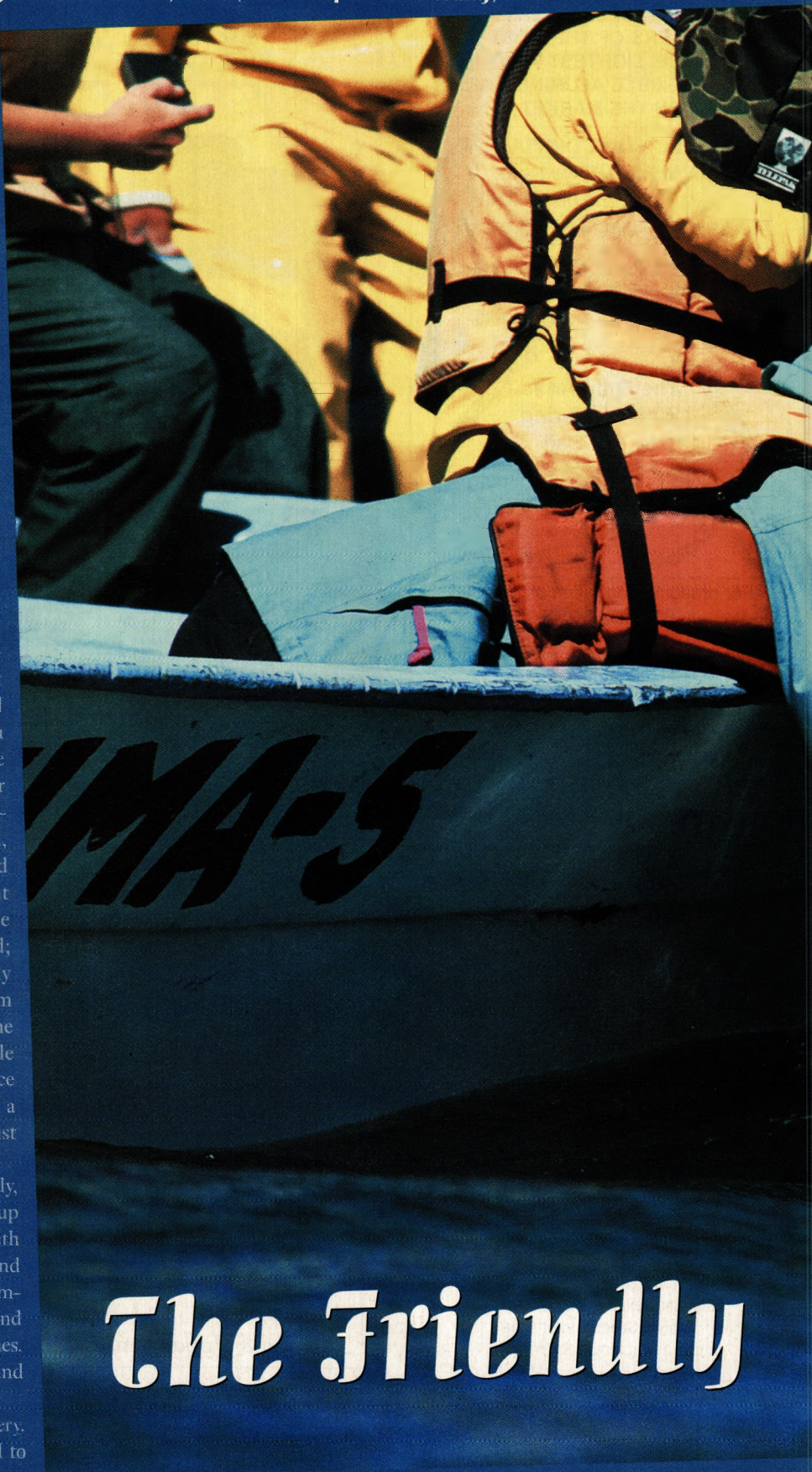
At a rancho outside of San Ignacio, we hired mules and guides for our trip to the painted caves. This was my first time on a mule in the mountains, and there was all sorts of trepidation. For a while it was a battle of wills, with the animal stopping to nibble juicy leaves, or short-cutting switchbacks while I desperately pulled on the reins and yelled, "Joo," which worked for the guides but not for me. These mules aren't shod; their feet grip firmly as they tread from rock to rock along the steep path, while maintaining balance and dignity. After a while I came to trust my animal.

Slowly and steadily, our mules trudged up a long track lined with cactus, palo blanco and palo verde trees. Temperatures were comfortable, but we wore long-sleeve shirts and trousers for protection from cactus spines. At a mountain pass, we left the mules and hiked to the first of three caves.

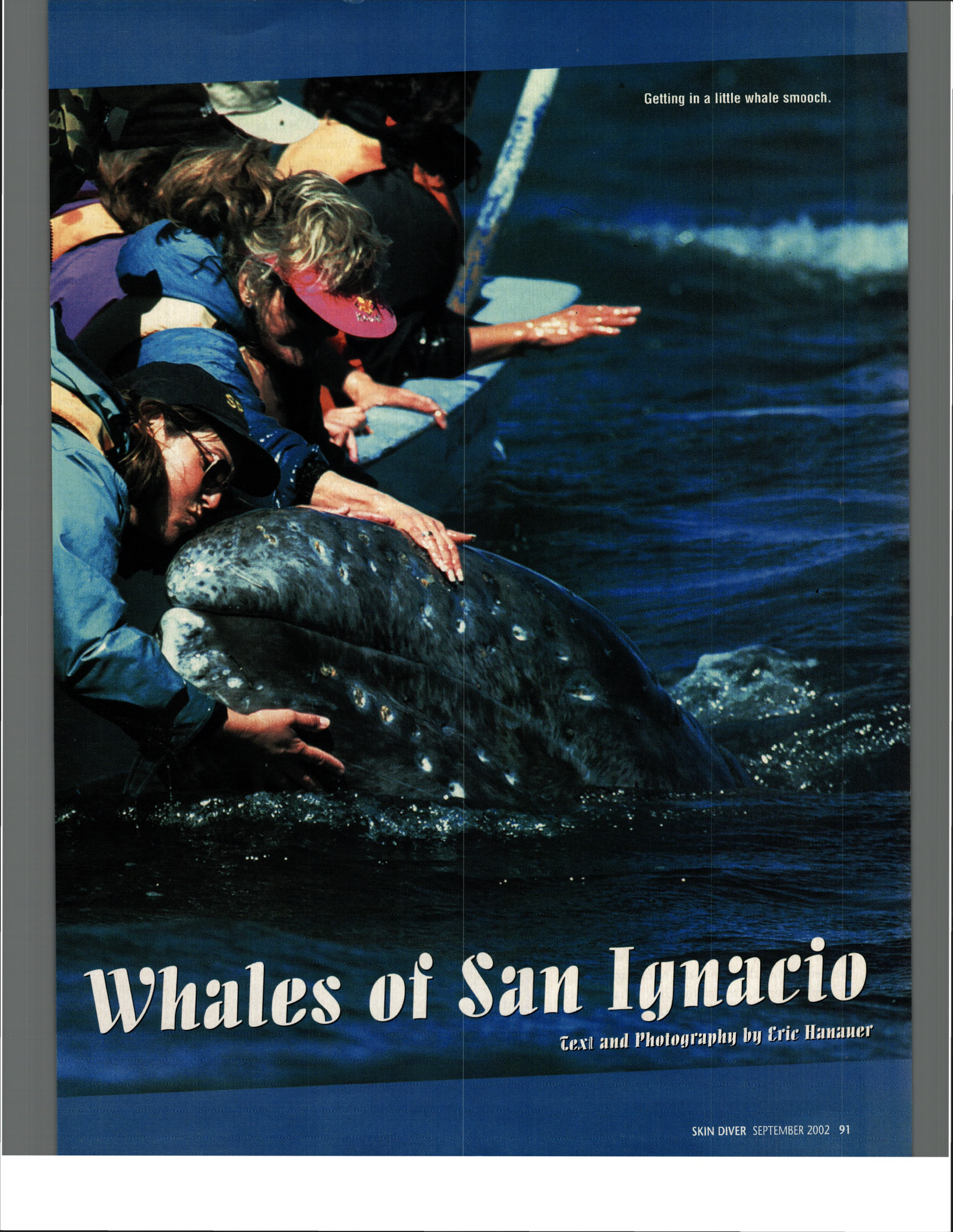
The cave paintings of Baja are a mystery. Larger than life size, they are estimated to



The beauty of Baja.



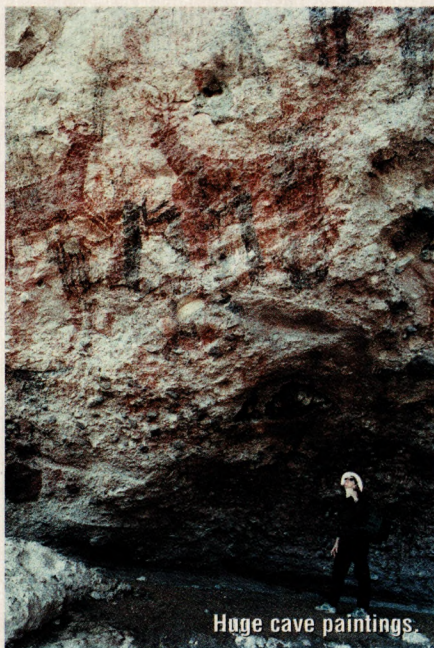
The Friendly

A photograph showing a group of people on a boat leaning over the side, touching and interacting with a large whale that is partially submerged in the ocean. The people are wearing blue jackets and hats. The whale's dark, textured skin is visible, and the ocean is a deep blue with some white foam from the boat's wake.

Getting in a little whale smooch.

Whales of San Ignacio

Text and Photography by Eric Hanauer



Huge cave paintings.

and Spain, these are much more recent. Later generations painted over existing images; even the newest date back some 500 years. When the Spanish arrived, the Indians were aware of the paintings, but didn't have a clue about their origin.

WHALES

Baja California has many faces, and I had seen most of them: the glitz of Cabo; the fantastic plant life of its flowering desert; the adventure of off-road excursions; and of course, the underwater world of the Sea of Cortez. The stark, austere beauty of San Ignacio Lagoon is yet another face. Driving across the natural salt pans at dusk reveals a surreal, lunar-like landscape, broken only by scattered, scrubby bushes.

Danny Ortiz said. "When the whales are coming it's all consuming. You just want to get

Leslie Lee stated, "It's an endless vista, an open view as far as you can see. The feeling that there's so much virgin wilderness, right at our back door in Southern California, is comforting to me."

One factor that's kept the lagoon undeveloped and pristine is difficult access. It's a 600-mile drive on a narrow, two-lane road from the U.S. border to the oasis town of San Ignacio, then another 32 miles on a rough, meandering dirt road to the lagoon. Four-wheel drive isn't required, but high clearance is strongly recommended. My feelings toward that final stretch were biased by flat tires on each of two previous trips. When the tires survived intact this time, I suspected that this trip could be charmed.

The lagoon is a refuge for Gray Whales, where they return every winter to mate and have their babies, then prepare for the long journey back to the Arctic Circle. Two other Baja lagoons are also winter homes to Gray Whales, but San Ignacio is famous as the home of the friendlies: Whales that swim right up to boats and allow humans to touch, hug and even kiss them. In cold print, that may seem

trite and anthropomorphic, but don't make judgements until you've experienced it.

On two previous trips I'd seen lots of whales, but none came very close to the boats. Veteran observers told me I'd been there too early. In January and February, whales are busy mating and giving birth. By March the males are on their way north, leaving the remaining females and babies more relaxed and willing to interact with humans.

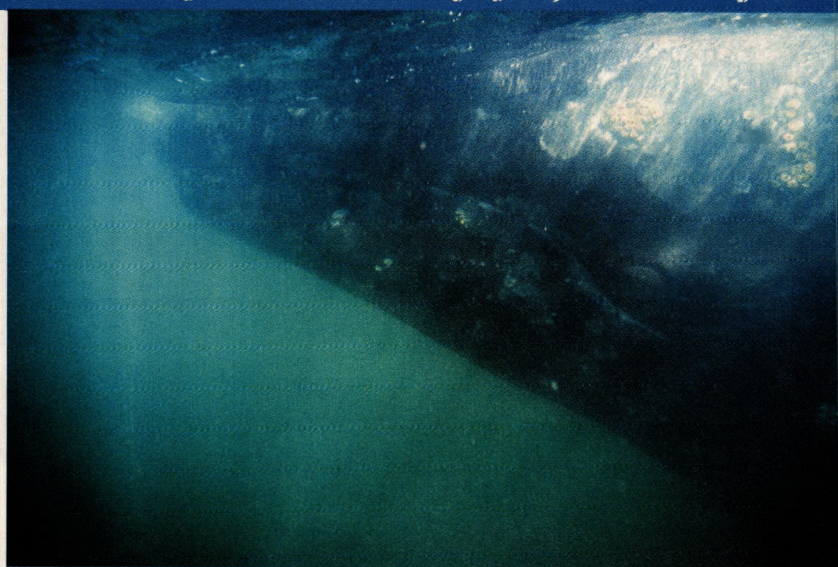
Our home base was a tent camp, but it isn't really camping when somebody else does all the work. Sleeping accommodations are spacious tents with cots and mattresses. Meals are served in a large dining tent, prepared on propane stoves and outdoor barbecues. There is a stall with solar-heated showers; an outhouse with waste that's composted; and all trash is trucked back to the San Ignacio city dump.

There are five camps at the lagoon, accommodating about 100 tourists at the peak of the season. All are leased from the local fishing cooperative, and are required to operate on a minimal impact basis. That means no electricity, no open fires and no running water.

Permits for whale watching are distributed among the local fishermen's families, and the camps contract with them to take out tourists in their open boats (pangas). In the past, big tour boats would come in, drop their inflatables, and the locals could do nothing but watch. Now, whale watching provides the fishermen with an essential source of income.

Their life isn't easy. Drinking water and most food is trucked in from San Ignacio. There is no doctor and no power except for solar panels. Whale watching provides jobs, but only from January through March.

According to Baja Expeditions Camp Director Glenn Neumann, "The fishermen know the lagoon better than anybody else. They know how to handle the boats; they know the weather; they know the whales. The only training I've had to do with



them is how to handle tourists."

Each morning for three days, we set out in the pangas. I was impressed by the boat handlers' (pangeros') sensitivity toward the whales. Only 16 boats at a time are allowed on the water, and



backs. If one had dived, she'd have been swimming.

Danny Ortiz said, "When the whales are coming it's all consuming. You just want to get your hands on these creatures and look them in the eye. All your worries go away. One image stays in my head: A baby whale making eye contact with me. It almost seemed like the mother was proud of the baby and wanted us to see it. She put her nose underneath and picked it up as if showing it off."

"I'd had friendly encounters before in Magdalena Bay," said Leslie, "but it was interesting to observe the relationship between the mothers and the babies—how they'd go back to mama for reassurance, then come back to us. Some of the babies would shoot straight for the boat, while others would hang till the mothers seemed to give permission. It was fascinating that they all have distinct personalities, just like we do."

"Their skin felt rubbery and squishy, softer than I thought it would. I felt privileged that they trusted me. You can show pictures and talk about it, but unless you're here, you really can't relate."

For me, this was a breakthrough. In the past two years it had been a thrill to see so many whales mating and spyhopping off in the distance, but now everything was happening up close.

Pro photographers Dave Fleetham and Nikki Konstantineau were on their first trip to San Ignacio, and had high expectations. Our first day out exceeded anything we'd dared hope for. After a half hour on the water, I realized that every whale photo I'd shot previously could be thrown away. At times it was whale overload; we hardly

your hands on these creatures and look them in the eye. All your worries go away...."

no more than two can be near a whale at one time. Others wait their turn, and move in when the first ones leave. Nobody is allowed to chase or cut in front of whales. Instead, they idle the engine and let them come over if they want to. Jose Luis Sanchez observed, "This sort of cooperation is something I've never seen before in Mexico. The whales and the environment are the important things to them, not their business."

Some whales seemed to be attracted by the noise or the vibration. Others brought their 1- to 2-month old babies to the boats, actually nudging them as if introducing them to us. The pangeros told us that whales are attracted to splashing and noise, so we dutifully splashed and made awkward attempts at whale calls. Whether or not our antics had any direct effect I don't know, but the whales did come around.

There's something about being so close to these magnificent animals that makes sophisticated adults act like little kids. Denise Fleetham was almost falling out of the boat, arms open, talking to the whales, and leaning on their

knew which way to look. Everywhere in the lagoon something was happening. Here a blow; there a breach; there a spyhop. With the motor shut down, we could hear the whales inhaling as well as exhaling, every few seconds, all around the lagoon.

Heading out on the second day, I realized if we didn't get another picture, we'd already won. But that day was even better than the first. Now they were spyhopping closer to the boat, and seemingly staying up longer. Some were breaching in the distance. One obviously pregnant female adopted our boat and followed it around the lagoon for nearly an hour. If the third day had been the first, we'd have been stoked out of our minds,

but we'd been spoiled by the first two. So, when it yielded only ordinary opportunities, we headed in early.

Danny summed up the entire experience: "It makes me ask, 'What's my position on this planet? How can I compare myself to this 30-ton creature?' With all the gloom and doom in the environment, it's great to see the whales doing so well." 🐳



THOSE WHO KNOW ME KNOW THAT I'M A bit of a fitness enthusiast (a.k.a., health nut, exercise masochist...) and certified (certifiable?) fitness trainer. Knowing this, a friend recently asked me about fitness training specifically for tek diving.

"I've been told that if I run for an hour to two hours, three to five times a week, or go for some other endurance aerobics, my air consumption will go down."

"Yes, it will," I had to admit, "but that doesn't make extreme aerobics a good idea for a diver." Then I explained...

Kinesology 101: Our muscles use energy three basic ways; two are anaerobic (no direct need for oxygen) and one aerobic (uses oxygen). Of the three, aerobic energy is the weakest, though it is sustainable for long duration. The anaerobic strengths (energies) are far stronger, but only short duration sustainable.

Human activity is primarily anaerobic.

Swimming while diving is aerobic, but most diving-related energy expenditures requiring strength are not. Lift a set of doubles, stagger to the back of the boat, climb the ladder in full kit, race across current for the trail line—all anaerobic activity. In diving, about the only aerobic activity is slow, steady swimming. Twenty to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, two or three times a week, will meet this fitness requirement.

What happens when you train through extreme aerobics, by say, running for 90 minutes, four or five times weekly? The Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands (SAID) principle kicks in. After about an hour to 90 minutes of continuous aerobics, your body activates responses that begin adaptations to extreme aerobics. Systemic cortisone converts to cortisol. The endocrine system suppresses testosterone



Human activity is primarily anaerobic. Swimming while diving is aerobic, but most diving-related energy expenditures requiring strength are not.

(especially if you're male) and raises myostatin. Inflammation responses may begin depending on the exercise, especially in the joints. The more frequently you train like this, the stronger these adaptive responses become.

So what does this mean? Cortisol is a catabolic, meaning it breaks down muscle tissue. Testosterone is

Endurance vs. Power



In exchange for lower air consumption, you're weaker (in terms of maximum strength) and you're aging the body. Sure, if you're into marathons or similar sports that's how you train and certainly it's healthier than being a couch slug. But for saving air while tekking?

Ultimately, your air consumption may still be a bit higher than an extreme aerobics diver, but much better than if you didn't keep fit. You'll probably comfortably wear bigger tanks, all else being equal, which offsets any real difference with the extreme aerobics athlete. And, if an emergency arises, you'll be more likely than the extreme aerobics athlete to have the strength and power you need to handle it.

Maintaining your lean muscle mass means that in an emergency, you have anaerobic strength. You can pour on bursts of power or help a fully laden diver up a ladder.

Your fitness should be more balanced. You need cardiovascular fitness, but that doesn't require marathon-type training. Rather than extreme aerobics,

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for DSAT and PADI, an avid tek diver and a Tec Deep Instructor Trainer. He's also been certified by the International Sports Sciences Association as a personal trainer. 

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On Oct. 22 to 25, the dive trade will gather in Las Vegas, NV, for DEMA's first "Fall show." Numerous new business programs and events have been scheduled. For attendees, new educational seminars have also been developed, and many of diving's celebrities will be on hand—Jean-Michel Cousteau, Cathy Church, Wyland, free diving champion Megan Heany-Grier and others. *For more information, call (800) 862-3483 or visit www.dema.org.*

A look at those who helped define diving and continue to push it forward.

Influential Women in Scuba

Hillary Viders

AN INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN SPEAKER AND AUTHOR, Hillary's has been deeply involved in many aspects of diving, including the environment and diver safety. Often sought-after for media interviews and background briefings, she has appeared on ABC News, been quoted in *USA Today* and *National Geographic*, and continues to use her expertise to further diving's awareness to the general public.



The first Director of Environmental Programs for NAUI and an Honorary Member of PADI's Project AWARE program, Hillary authored *Marine Conservation For The 21st Century* several years ago, and has seen many of her sugges-

tions and ideas adopted. The 1997 DAN/Rolux Diver of the Year and a 2001 NOGI recipient, she was also honored by then-President Bill Clinton with the prestigious Take Pride in America Award in 1999.

Hillary is frequently called upon for her knowledge of deep diving and rescue techniques. She has consulted with the U.S. State Department, Department of Commerce, U.S. Navy and New York State and local police. She lent her expertise to the recovery efforts for the tragic TWA Flight 800 crash. She continues to teach courses on hyperbaric medicine, search and rescue, deep diving and salvage.

Hillary also helped to start the Women's Scuba Diving Hall of Fame in March 2000. 🐟

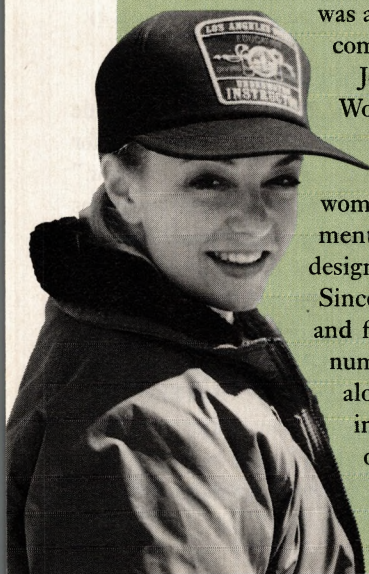
Jennifer King

AS A CERTIFIED DIVER FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, JENNIFER HAS BEEN AN active and key proponent of scuba diving and issues related to women in diving. An instructor certified through a number of training organizations, she has traveled and worked as a dive instructor throughout the U.S. and Caribbean.

From 1990 to 1992, Jennifer served as the first, and only, President of the Los Angeles County Underwater Instructors Association, and was active in promoting diving to the Southern California community through consumer dive shows.

Jennifer is best known for her development of the Women's Equipment Test Team (WETT) and the Women's Scuba Association. Together with Lorraine Sadler, she was at the forefront of women's diving issues, and helped numerous scuba equipment manufacturers in the creation of equipment designed with women in mind.

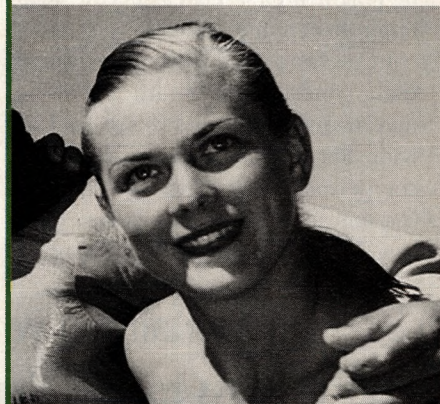
Since then, she has been a featured speaker on women's and family diving issues at the DEMA Trade Show and numerous consumer shows across the country. Working alongside Hillary Viders and others, Jennifer helped to introduce the annual Women's Scuba Diving Hall of Fame event at the Beneath the Sea Show in New York. 🐟



Zale Parry

SHE'S BEEN NICKNAMED "THE FIRST lady of diving," and for good reason. Zale Parry was among the first and most prominent female divers in the early days of scuba diving, when millions saw diving in its black-and-white splendor through the TV series *Sea Hunt*. Zale appeared in many episodes of this series, and helped to show that women could dive just as effortlessly as the men.

In August 1954, Zale set a women's depth record on scuba at 209 feet. The publicity from the event help put her on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* magazine. As a result, when Hollywood needed a woman for any water-oriented project, they usually called upon Zale.



Her enthusiasm for diving and continued dedication to the sport has resulted in numerous honors and awards. After being named the first woman President of the Underwater Photographic Society in 1960, Zale has since been recognized with DEMA's "Reaching Out Award," the WSA "Diver of the Year" award, induction into the Women's Diving Hall of Fame as a inaugural member in 2000, and most recently, was inducted in the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame in the Cayman Islands.

Zale continues to be an active diver and gets in the water whenever possible. She and Al Tillman completed the first of three books on the history of scuba diving, *Scuba America*, last year. 🐟

Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1982



The Great Oyster War

IT WAS THE AGE-OLD DILEMMA OF THE OLD VS. THE NEW, TRADITION VS. technology, oyster tongs vs. oyster divers. In February 1982, Ellsworth Boyd wrote of the "Great Oyster War," which was ripping through the chilly waters of Chesapeake Bay. The oyster tongs (who got their name from the hand-operated tongs used to scrape clusters of oysters from the bottom of the bay) had claimed "squatters' rights" over the bay's bounty since 1820. Whereas tongs usually worked in 10 to 20 depth waters, scuba divers had no limits when it came to depth and could drift close to the bottom, choosing the best of the brood. Divers told tongs not to be threatened by their increasing numbers, as the harsh diving conditions would weed out all but the most committed. The unsettled debate left the tongs grumbling, but it was predicted that at some point they would join forces with the divers against a new threat on the horizon—"power dredging." 🐟

1970

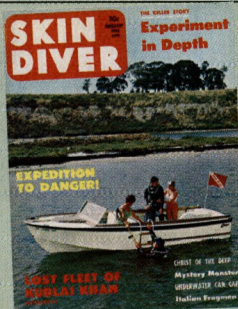
The Diving Revolution In Cuba

IN MAY 1970, RICHARD R. FAGEN WROTE OF INFILTRATING THE GUARDED WATERS of Cuba. Working with Cuba's "Department of Underwater Investigations of the Cuban Academy of Sciences," he dived wrecks such as the *Sanchez Barcaiztegui*, long ignored by all but the marine life teeming in the waters that surrounded it. At one point, he lost his U/W camera, only to have it recovered by a freediving local who got his start as a lobster diver and violated everything that Fagen was taught in diving classes. Exploring

waters in restricted military areas, the author was in awe of the "diversity, size and innocence" of the fish who had most likely never seen a human before, and "...came upon a scene more primitive and exciting than [he] had ever encountered during [his] 15 years of diving in the Caribbean." He noted that the Cubans did not view their rich waters as a tourist attraction, but encouraged readers to seize the opportunity to visit if they were lucky enough to get permission from the State Department. Since government policy has scantily changed during the past 32 years, hopefully the waters haven't as well. 🐟



1963



Christ of the Deep

IT BEGAN WITH A JOURNEY. IN FEBRUARY 1963, JOE CAPPo reported on the arrival of the 9-foot bronze statue "Christ of the Deep" to the North American continent. It had traveled over waters all the way from Genoa, Italy, finally landing upon the shores of Chicago's Windy City Navy Pier on August 6, 1962.

Dedicated to all those who have perished at sea, the statue was a gift from Egidio Cresse of Italy, and created by Guido Golletti, a noted Italian artist. It is a duplicate of "Cristo degli Abissi," which resides at the bottom of the Mediterranean Ocean off Portofino, Italy. The "Christ of the Deep" was cast from the same mold as the original.

Upon its arrival in Chicago, care of the statue was transferred to representatives of the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials. With the help of the Naval Reserve, a training flight transported the 30,000 pound statue to Orlando, and it eventually made its way to Pennekamp State Park off Key Largo, FL. On August 25, 1965, it was submerged and bolted to concrete slabs—its journey over, destined to become a landmark for divers. 🐟



Every day, divers are humbled by the sheer exhilaration of encountering marine life. From curious Calico Bass and playful dolphins, to sleek sharks and heart-stopping Humpback Whales—to be in their midst is the “stuff” of diving. So, each month, *Skin Diver* guest writers will relive their unique moments under the sea, leaving us at the edge of our seats and aching to get back in the water.

SOMETIMES A FRUSTRATING PROBLEM TURNS OUT to be a blessing in disguise. My dive buddy, Guen, and I are about to learn this lesson as we dive the wreck of the *Benwood* in Key Largo, FL.

In going through my camera check ritual at the beginning of the dive, I discover a problem with the dual strobe connector. My options are to continue the dive with an unreliable camera system, re-board to attempt a hasty repair, or simply hand it to a crewmember and dive “naked” without it. I reluctantly choose the latter.

While Guen and I are exploring the top of the wreck, I notice a large Gray Angelfish to my left. As we drift toward her, I notice 10 feet of fishing line extending from the angel’s belly. Evidently, the angel is used to divers because she nonchalantly watches our approach. A shiny, metal object protrudes from the base of her ventral fin. Casually inching closer and closer, I cringe to see it is an embedded stainless steel hook.

I debate as to whether to do something or let nature take its course. I know the area is either infected or will be soon. If the hook has not punctured any major organs and the infection is minimal, she may be able to shed the hook on her own and survive. Conversely, the line could become entangled, leaving the angel vulnerable to predators, additional stress, further injury, massive infection and starvation. So, I decide to act.

I drift behind the angelfish and concentrate on the trailing line. When it passes within reach, I take the line with both hands and steadily pull her to us. She briefly fights against the tension, then appears to accept her fate.

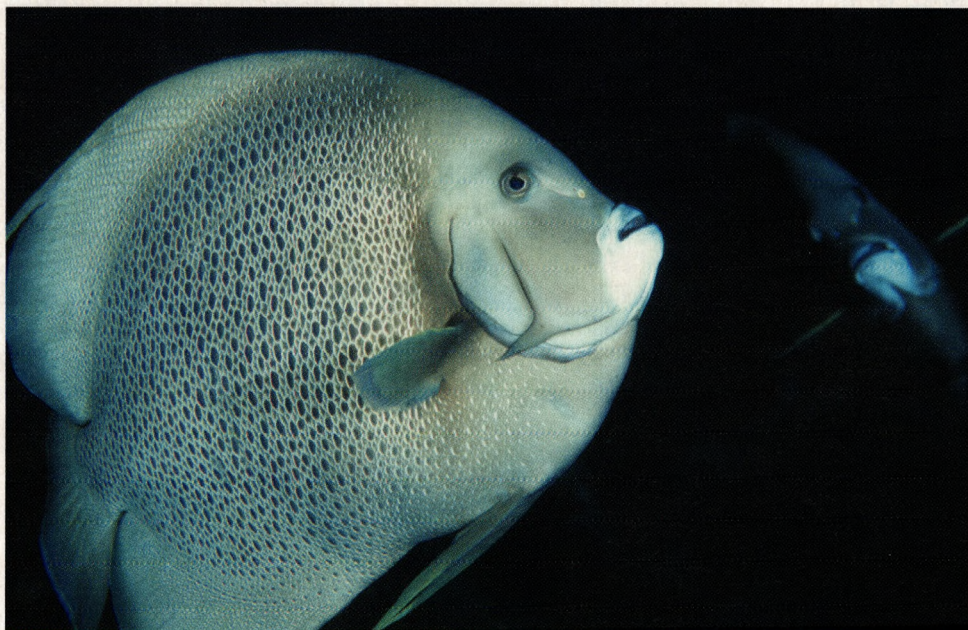
When the angelfish finally reaches my BC, I cradle her in my left arm. She immediately goes limp, without struggling or trying to escape. A careful inspection of her lower abdomen reveals no signs of infection; she was probably hooked within the past few days. After a deep breath, I gently, but firmly, push the hook up, around and then down. I smile and release a stream of bubbles as it easily slides

out on the first attempt. I examine the remaining wound, then release our patient and pray for her full recovery.

Instead of racing away or hiding, the angelfish slowly swims to a coral outcropping, then circles back toward us. She simply stares at two open-mouthed, bewildered divers and swims even closer. When she closes to within three feet, the angel begins to swim figure-eights around us. She even rubs against me a few times like one of my cats back home. I do not know what to think or feel until the angelfish stops directly in front of my face mask. She seems to be trying to read my thoughts or convey some unspoken message. Transfixed by her gaze, I lose track of time and have no clue how long the moment lasts. As the angel swims over to Guen, I know I have been touched in a most profound way.

We decide to continue to explore the *Benwood*. After swimming about 30 feet, I turn to look for our new friend. Apparently the encounter is over because the angelfish is nowhere to be seen. Imagine my surprise as I face forward to find her in front of my mask again! For the remainder of the

An Angel in Need of Mercy

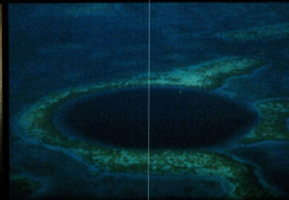


dive, the angelfish is our ever-present companion. Wherever we go, she follows, leads or swims by our side, rarely straying much further than an arm’s length away. When our pressure gauges indicate that there is no more bottom time left, we reluctantly say goodbye, and I’m thankful that, for once, my camera did not get in the way. 🐟 —BY A. SCOTT JOHNSON

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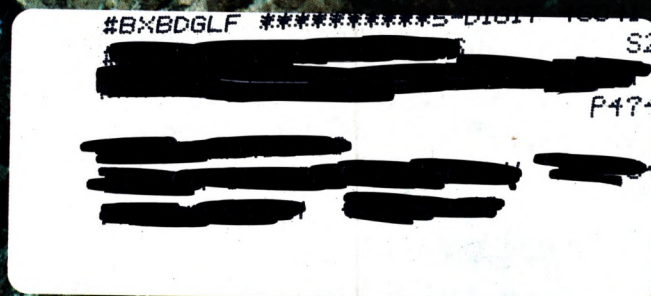
THE WORLD'S MOST READ SCUBA DIVING AND SNORKELING MAGAZINE • NOVEMBER 2001

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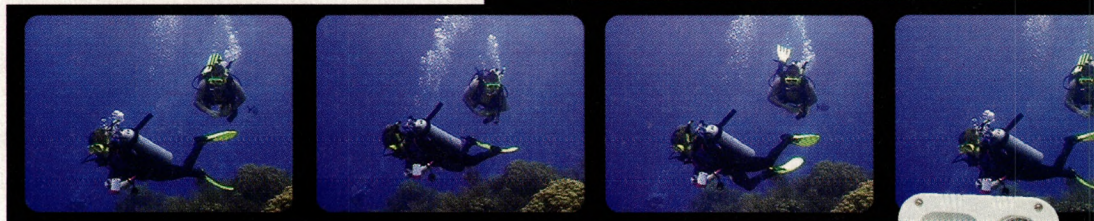
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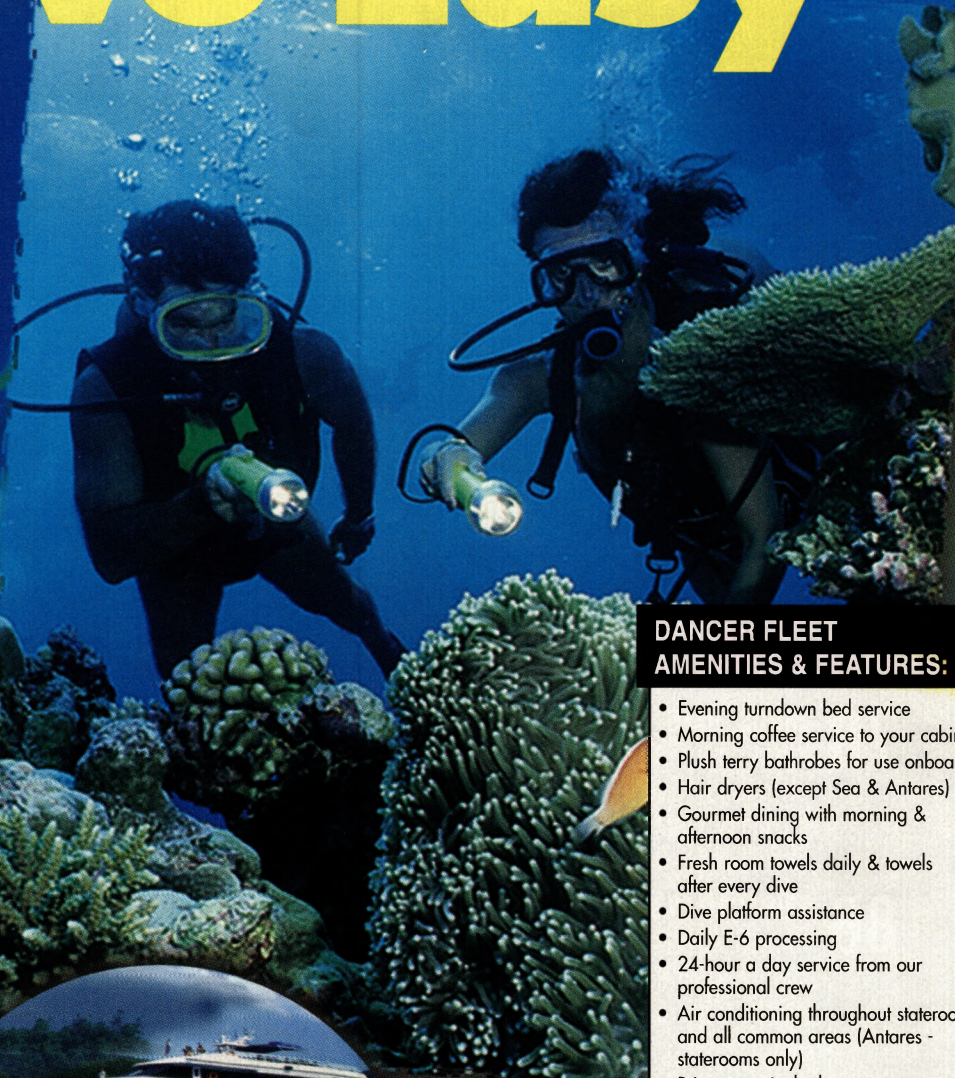
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Devil's Eye, Ginnie Springs

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Background photo:

Massive *Porites* coral.

Majuro Atoll, Eastern Micronesia

Photo: Brad Doane

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ARUBA Karl Shreeves is a single guy, so when we asked him to go spend some time with *Jane* and *Debbie* in Aruba, he had no qualms. These pretty ladies are completely intact, in warm and relatively shallow water, and have lots of eligible friends. Aruba's coasts are sprinkled with coral-encrusted wrecks, buzzing with marine life. It's the kind of wreck diving divers dream about. Make a date on page 56.



CENTRAL FLORIDA It's the holidays, so money's tight. That trip to the Caribbean ain't happenin', your parents are coming, and your lil' girl is gonna throw a fit unless she gets that Britney Spears pink cell phone she wants. Need to get away? Check out the Florida Springs. Dive in a freshwater sanctuary and spend some time confiding with a curious and cuddly Manatee. Clock out and jump in on page 44.



EASTERN MICRONESIA Ever kick yourself for not acting on a hot stock tip? Well, you'll feel worse if don't take our advice and get out to the far flung islands of Micronesia. Like rare gems, the 2,000-plus islands and atolls are tucked in low-lying beds of coral. Mahi Mahi, Marlin and sharks fill these rich waters, making anyone who gets here a diver of good fortune. Pull your lottery numbers on page 68.



THE CAYMAN ISLANDS Divers are so intent on seeing what's underwater they sometimes miss what's on top. In the Cayman Islands, the fascinating animal life extends beyond the sea. Combining diving with bird watching and bat hunting (yup, bats) reveals a side that many bubble blowers never take the time to see. Start your multi-environment safari on page 78.



CURAÇAO Family roots run deep, and for tek diver Karl Shreeves, deep is not a problem. Join Shreeves as he dives into his own history and acquaints himself with the beauty of the *Superior Producer*, the Dutch language and the towering mounds of coral at Mushroom Forest. To great-grandmother's house we go on page 86.



JORDAN It's amazing what a dive-minded monarch can do for the environment. King Abdullah is an enthusiastic diver and responsible for turning his nation's short but rich coastline into a marine preserve. Several artificial reefs have been put down, thanks to the King, and divers are just beginning to discover this desert paradise. Get reign-ed in on page 50.





CONTRIBUTORS

PETER VERHOOG and **GEORGINA WIERSMA** lived on the shores of the southern Red Sea for six months. They made hundreds of dives, saw many great and small strange creatures, but never succeeded in discovering a frogfish or a seahorse while there. That's why the traveling, diving, writing and photographing couple headed for Jordan, not only a real kingdom, but also a magic kingdom of seahorses and frogfish. And there, it finally happened. 🐡



The late John Denver sang, "...coming home to a place he'd never been before," which **KARL SHREEVES** did on his recent trips to Curaçao and Aruba. "My family goes back 200 years there," he says. "My mother was born on Curaçao and my grandmother on Aruba. I went for the diving, but the trip really put me in touch with the past. The diving was great, by the way."

Strong praise coming from *Skin Diver's* tekkie guru, who once said that if forced to choose, he'd "trimix dive in a 300-foot-deep swimming pool before no-decoing it on a 30-foot-deep reef." 🐡

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"YOUR HEART WILL NEVER BE IDLE AGAIN." These words glared at me from the back page of a magazine. I saw this ad while waiting for a flight. It featured a sleek car of some kind. *That's an interesting little sentence*, the editor inside me thought, then I filed the seven words away in my subconscious, and settled into the business of being an editor. I called frequent contributor Fred Garth to discuss a few article ideas.

"Oh, hi, Ty," said his wife. "Fred's not here. He's down at the springs. I'll tell him you called."

"OK. Thanks."

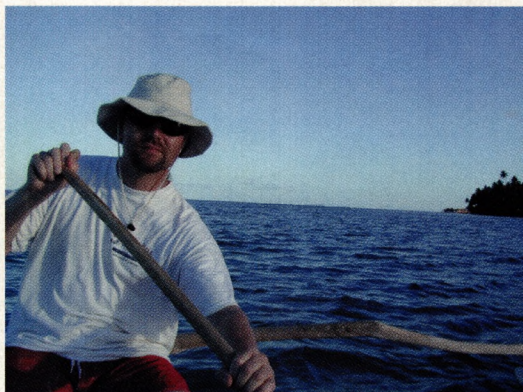
I checked my watch, figured out what time it was in Holland, then called Peter Verhoog and Georgina Weirsma to arrange travel dates for a story.

Beeeeeeep... "Thanks for calling, we will be in Jordan until the 23rd."

I hung up, my Puritan work ethic beginning to feel the pangs of being unproductive. Then, my phone rang.

It's Daryl Carson, features editor and gear guru calling from Catalina Island, CA.

"Ty, we're going to have to reschedule the gear bag photo shoot."



Your Heart Will Never Be Idle Again

"Why?"

"Well...we got out to the cove and all these sea lions came out to play...we had 70 feet of viz...we thought, oh, just one dive. It led to three dives...and then we lost the good light. You know how it is."

Well, we do work for a dive mag, I thought. But, more importantly, it was time to excel, time for a good, productive command decision.

"Okay, reschedule."

I hung up all aglow, my work ethic felt muscular again, but I was envious. I'd missed the dives with one of my favorite marine creatures, sea lions. For a brief moment, I stewed.

Then the words, "Your heart will never be idle again," returned.

Hmmm.... That ad, now that I thought about it, was all wrong. It had a photo of a sports car. It should have had a photo of a diver. He'd be hovering in the air-clear water of the Florida springs, maybe thinking of his next trip, perhaps to Lawrence of Arabia's Gulf of Aqaba off Jordan. Or, perhaps the diver would be loading a gear bag with cool swag, before jetting off on a wild blue adventure. So, going with the flow, I put all three ideas in this issue. Fred got 500 million years deep into Florida's springs—absolutely went Jurassic on the place. Peter and Georgina...well, they did indeed dive a destination fit for a diver king, the royal-by-decree-reefs of Jordan. And Daryl got the shots, only experiencing a little emotional baggage by taking time away from his diving. I'm happy to say none of them has ever gotten enough of being wet. Their hearts are already in full motion, ready to explore some more.

Good diving. 🐟

TY SAWYER, EDITOR

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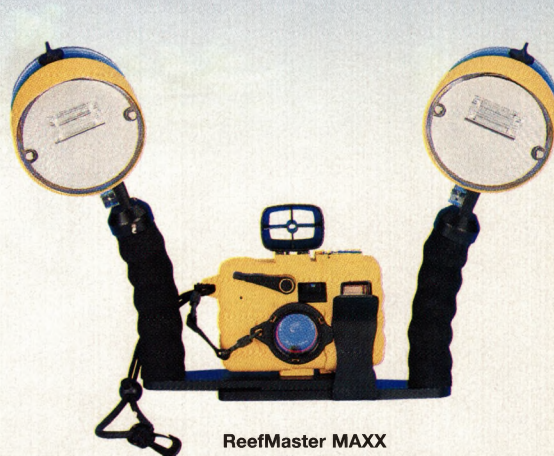
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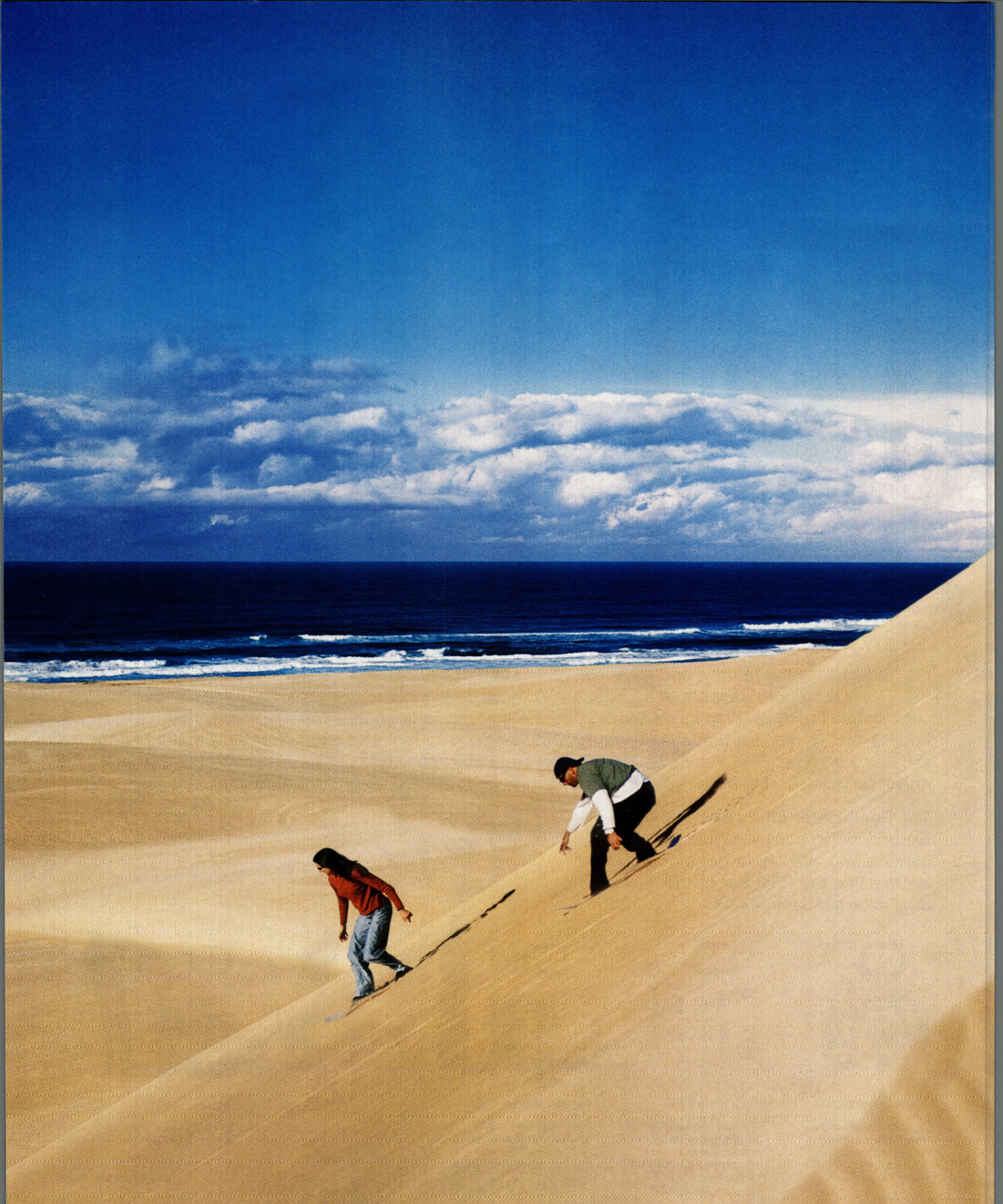
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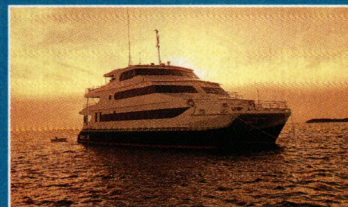
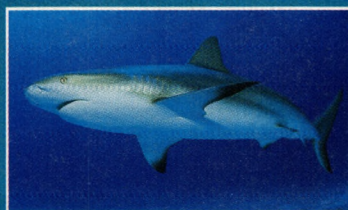
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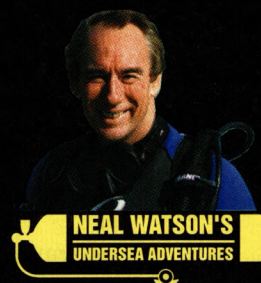
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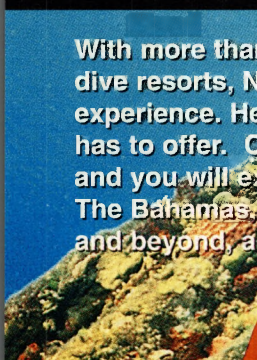
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FREEPORT, BAHAMAS



Readers Speak Out

Wacky for Wyland

We just want you all at *Skin Diver* to know how much we love Wyland's new column [Blue Adventures for Kids]. We recently went on a family vacation to Maui, and visited the Wyland gallery. My husband and I have been fans of his artwork for years, and now our children (ages nine and six) are into him as well, especially his animated characters. Our eldest is already an avid snorkeler, and Wyland's column and artwork only get us all the more excited about adventures in the sea.

—The Crowley Family, San Diego, CA



stayed there with my new fiancé and his family. The locals were really friendly. They took us fishing and even organized a real luau for us right on the property.

We were all disappointed when the partnership soured and my father-in-law elected to sell out. Years later, the Hawaiian government bought the place and made it into a park. I visited Pualaa State Park about five years ago and was saddened to see that the house was run down, the landscape unkempt and the once pristine oceanview was marred by his and hers "honeybuckets." I still tell friends to check it out if they're in the area, but I wonder if it will ever regain the beauty and character I remember?

—Shawna Hodges, via e-mail

Burned In Memory

I loved Fred Garth's article on Hawaiian lava diving [August, 2001]. It's now at the top of my "To Dive" list. My in-laws, in partnership with other investors, once owned a piece of property that he described. There was a huge pool that was ocean-fenced on one side and warmed by volcanic springs on the other. It was like swimming in a hot tub full of tropical fish and eels. I was 18 years old and on my first Hawaiian vacation when I

Bermuda's Mystical Dive Portal

I just picked up the September issue of *Skin Diver* and was captured by the article, "The Bermuda Files." I found it to be informative and educational, [because I have] never been to such a historical and fascinating place. I guess everyone has heard of the "Bermuda Triangle," but [A. Scott Johnson] made the magical spell of its history and beauty captivating.

—Brenda Mullins, via e-mail

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FREE FLOW

EDITED BY TIFFANY H. CAREY

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET the chance to dive a deep, altitude night dive in a structure that also happens to be the former home of a nuclear missile?

Deep in the rattlesnake country of western Texas, my dive buddy and I visited an abandoned ICBM missile silo called, "Dive Valhalla." It's a unique dive site for adventurous aqua-nuts and an interesting notation for our logbooks, yet less than 200 divers have explored this well of nuclear war history.

After only two years of service in the early 1960s, the silo was decommissioned and its contents sold for salvage. Gradually, groundwater filtered through the four-foot thick reinforced walls of the silo to create an underground pool of clear water, 135 feet deep and 60 feet in diameter, with a large pile of steel debris remaining at the bottom.

We rendezvoused with the owners of the silo, Mark and Linda Hannifin of Family Scuba Center in Midland, TX, one summer morning, and they took us on an orientation tour of part of America's Cold War heritage. The Hannifins also conduct advanced training classes in their "underground swimming pool," in addition to diving tours.

In rolling hills, approximately 25

miles southwest of Abilene, TX, we could see little of the former military compound above ground except for the sealed launch doors, a small cone-shaped escape hatch and the reinforced concrete entrance to the silo, which is no larger than a small shed.

Guarded by a large iron gate to keep out trespassers, we entered the silo's doorway and immediately descended a set of stairs to the first level of a series of winding corridors and blast doors that were designed to keep the former inhabitants safe from attack and radiation contamination.

We had to travel down a stairwell of

area, complete with a bathroom and changing area. With constant 60°F water and 68°F air temperatures, the silo offers a cool retreat during the hot summer months. At an altitude of 2,420 feet, divers can practice a number of advanced skills in this deep, dark, yet clear pool of water.

At the bottom of a staircase is the

Valhalla by David Prichard

floating entry platform. We found that only one person at a time can use it without being bounced around while carrying gear. We finished gearing up

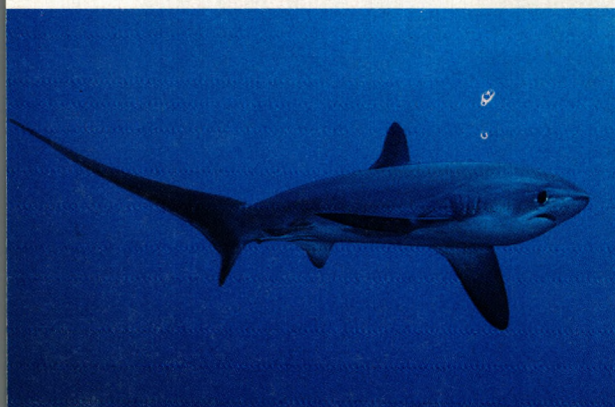


Cold water has replaced Cold War deep in the silo.

five flights to get to a cavern-like cylindrical room that formerly housed the silo's control center and living quarters. This now acts as the divers' staging

and did our final checks before taking a giant stride into the chilly water.

The silo's overhead lighting system provided ample illumination for sur-



It is presumed that the Thresher uses its tail to bludgeon its prey of small fish and squid.

THRESHER THRILLS

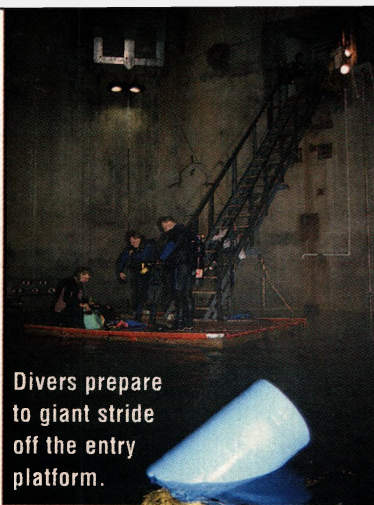
THEY SAY YOU CAN SET YOUR WATCH by them. They arrive daily at this secret shoal that stretches six city blocks, and we are going to be among the few who have ever seen this marine wonder—the Thresher Shark.

We are diving off the coast of Cebu, about 25 minutes by boat from the resorts of Malapascua in the Philippines. The shoal is at 65 feet. There's really not much to see

here—a few small reef fish and some pelagics, but otherwise just rubble.

We have learned about a small section of the shoal from local friends, and, as far as we know, this is the only spot in the world that is visited daily by Thresher Sharks. Yes, every day, at exactly the same time. They stay for a couple of hours, then they leave, off attending to the business of being a shark.

PHOTOS (TOP TO BOTTOM): DAVID PRICHARD; ROBERT YIN.



Divers prepare to giant stride off the entry platform.

face activities and the first few feet of the dive, but the ambient light disappeared around 40 feet, quickly causing the water to become pitch black.

We used a down-line, as we quickly made our way to the rubble-filled bottom that began around 100 feet. After a quick inspection of the girders, catwalks and other abandoned material, we ascended up to the only potential overhead hazard in the silo: the remains of an inertial guidance system shack at 50 feet, which helped keep the missile on its course to its destination.

One of the most interesting sights in the silo is where mineral-rich groundwater has seeped in and formed interesting calcium formations. These arrangements look like small clumps of brittle spaghetti that have been stuck to the wall.

We ascended through the bizarre shimmer of surface lights to finish the dive and then headed back up the staircase to quickly enter the data of this most unusual journey into our logbooks. 🐟

IF YOU LOOK AT A PICTORIAL history of skin and scuba diving in Southern California, you are sure to see images of spearfishermen holding up enormous Giant Sea Bass. And by the 1970s, the combination of sport fishing, spearfishing and commercial fishing had all but eliminated Giant Sea Bass from the waters of Southern California. Just as sightings of grizzly bears, bald eagles and so many other apex predators have been

reduced in numbers, so were those with Giant Sea Bass.

In the late 1970s, in an effort to replenish its decreasing numbers, the Giant Sea Bass (also known as Black Sea Bass, *Stereolepis gigas*) was placed on California's protected species list, and taking them in any way was declared illegal. For almost 25 years, few Giant Sea Bass were seen by divers, and many wondered if we had done too little too late.

Fortunately, five to seven years ago, divers began to see Giant Sea Bass at various sites off several of the California Channel Islands, as well as a few places along the coast of the main-

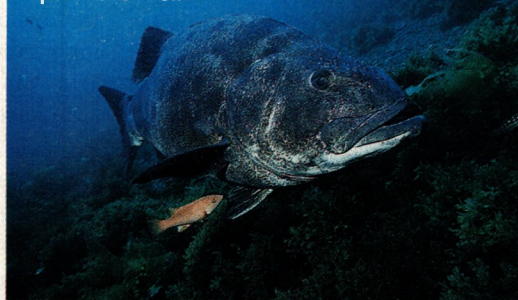
QUIT SHOOTING OUR FISH

by mardy snyderman

land. Three years ago a group of these majestic fish began to congregate at Italian Gardens off Catalina Island, CA. And on some dives it is possible to see as many as 25 Giant Sea Bass gliding through the kelp forest, being cleaned by female Sheephead and Calico Bass. Some of these fish are easily six feet long and weigh in excess of 400 pounds.

But just when we thought the Giant Sea

Big, beautiful and the target of renegade spearfishermen.



Bass was on the rebound, divers began encountering fish with spear shafts hanging out of their sides and battle scars on their bodies. Spearfishing is a respectable sport, but spearfishing endangered,

protected and recovering species is not. Doing so is both illegal and unconscionable.

As divers, it is our responsibility to make certain that marine life is allowed to survive peacefully and plentifully. If you know anyone who is shooting these fish,

please report them to the California Department of Fish and Game. 🐟

To learn more about this issue, log on to www.kelpforestcoalition.org.

REWARD:

Body Glove and Dive 'N Surf have partnered to offer a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone caught killing a Giant Sea Bass.

For information, call Hillary at (310) 374-3441, ext. 207.

by Susan Tunis & Robert Yin

Thresher Sharks live in temperate and subtropical waters worldwide. They're even off the coast of San Diego, where we live. Still, we've never seen one...yet.

They can grow to be 18 to 20 feet long. They have large, black eyes. Their trademark tails make identifying them easy. It's half of the shark's total body length. It's like a Nike logo—it's the Nike Shark.

Just do it, I think to myself as the first one reaches the edge of the drop-off. Right on schedule.

Moments later, we see another. Our guides think they make their daily visitations here because of a cleaning station, and we agree. We can see cleaner fish in action around the area the sharks are circling.

The Threshers are shy. We never see more than two at one time. Maybe they are the same two, or perhaps they are alternating with their

reclusive friends. They keep their distance, which presents a problem for taking pictures.

But we get the shots—they're thrilling. I would say this was a once-in-a-lifetime dive, but the truth is, we are hoping to dive this site in Cebu for many years to come. Yes, we've been a bit vague on the details. This is a secret place. We want it to remain a safe haven for Thresher Sharks. With fins like that, it's entirely too easy to wind up in somebody's soup. 🐟

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

IN JUNE, IN CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA, representatives of seven nations signed the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). With 21 of 24 albatross species in decline, the legislation is timely.

But the treaty will only be successful if the international community can control the real source of the problem: the explosion of pirate fishing in the Southern Ocean.

It is no secret that long-line fishing is the primary cause of avian mortality. Albatrosses are attracted to their long sets of hooks baited with squid and fish. The birds pounce on the hooks lying on the surface, are then snagged, dragged underwater and drowned. With some 100 million hooks set in the Southern Ocean each year, it is easy to see why albatross populations are at risk.

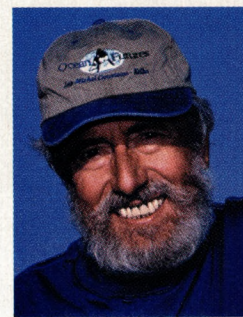
According to the National Audubon

Flying Free

Society, half of all albatross populations contain fewer than 100 breeding pairs. The Amsterdam albatross, native not to Holland but to remote Amsterdam Island, is the most highly endangered; their numbers hover between five and eight pairs.

The good news is that the fishing industry has been working hard on technology that helps to reduce the slaughter. Weighted hooks, for example, sink before the birds can get to them. The same result is achieved by deflating the swim bladders of bait fish and casting the lines beyond the churn of boat propellers. So-called "lining tubes" distribute line beneath the surface, and the deployment of streamers—thrashing plastic snakes—help scare the birds away altogether. The ultimate in avoidance technology is the simplest: setting the lines at night, when the birds are not around.

Legal mechanisms complement the technology. The Convention on



...the
albatross is
but a symbol
of a much
larger issue:
overfishing.



PHOTO: TOM ORBWAY, JMC PHOTO; LIONEL POZZOLI

**In March, 114 nations signed on to a United Nations
plan to combat illegal fishing. But the problem
is not so easy to combat.**

Resolution, and the measures adopted by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources target bycatch, with an eye toward reducing seabird mortality.

The new treaty will build upon this considerable progress. It pledges signatories to minimize bycatch, conserve marine habitat, improve research and monitoring, and remove introduced predators at albatross breeding sites.

But such measures are only a first step. The real work will begin when the international community, signatories included, begins to seriously and aggressively combat illegal fishing.

responsible for most of the albatross deaths of the last decade. In just four years, some 330,000 birds were drowned. In one year alone, according to Greenpeace, the losses amounted to 15 percent of some albatross species.

In March, 114 nations signed on to a United Nations plan to combat illegal fishing. But the problem is not so easy to combat. Illegal vessels sail under so-called "flags of convenience," sold to rogue boat owners for a small profit by nations unable to police their actions. The U.N. plan urges nations to levy severe sanctions against violators, but the real problem is more complex.

For the demise of the albatross is but a symbol of a much larger issue: overfishing.

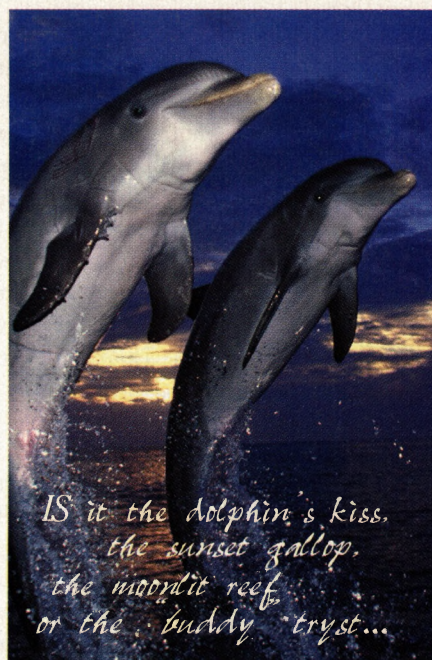
It was, after all, overfishing in their home waters that first brought Spanish and South Korean fishermen to Chile. And only when Chilean waters were fished out, they moved to the Southern Ocean.

We, the consumers of "sea bass" in Europe and North America, gladly do our part by making it worthwhile for the fishermen to exterminate stock after stock of toothfish.

What we need is a comprehensive plan involving the institution of sustainable fishing practices, an all-out assault on piracy, the exposure and abolition of flags of convenience, and heightened consumer consciousness. It is a tall order, and it is beginning to happen. Whether it will happen in time to save the albatross is uncertain. The new treaty gives these magnificent birds at least a fighting chance.

But the real significance of this opportunity is larger than seabird exclusion devices and night sets. The albatross, that symbolic messenger of seafarers for centuries, is calling to us once again. And this time, we would do well to heed its message. 🐟

**Time is running out for the
albatross—21 of 24
species are in decline.**



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ASK THE PRO

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE Nikonos 15 mm lens is a great lens. It is extremely sharp and versatile allowing creative photographers to work with subjects as small as a crinoid on a sea fan to those as large as Blue Whales. But too many photographers fall into the trap of thinking that because a 15 mm lens has a wider angle of acceptance and is more expensive than many other wide-angle lenses that the 15 mm lens is obviously better in *all* shooting scenarios. Sometimes the wider lens is the better choice, but in other instances it is not.

All pieces of photographic equipment are designed to accomplish certain tasks. Used within their design parameters most modern lenses do a great job of helping us create the high quality images that we want to produce, but no one lens is best in all situations. The answer to David's question really should be based on the follow-up ques-

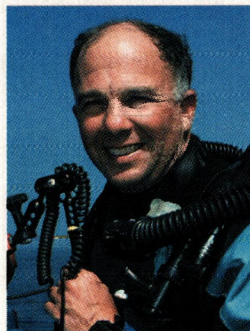
...no one lens is best
in all situations.

tion, "What types of images do you want to create?" If he can describe those images, I can answer the question more specifically.

The Nikonos 15 mm lens is an excel-



For animals that aren't camera shy, a 15 mm lens can work well. But for those a bit more skiddish, a 20 or 24 mm lens may be your best bet.



Wider is Not Always Better

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

I want to buy a wide-angle lens for my Nikonos V. Some people tell me the only lens to consider is a Nikonos 15 mm. Others say that both a 20 mm and a 28 mm lens are much less expensive and either will be just fine. What should I do? —David C., Santa Barbara, CA

"What types
of images do
you want
to create?"

lent choice when photographing: large animals such as Whale Sharks, White Sharks, Manta Rays and Pilot Whales; other big objects including ship wrecks and artifacts such as deck guns; also medium-sized animals like sea lions, seals and baited sharks, which often allow you to get as close as you want; and subjects like sea fans and sponges that are attached to the sea floor. In this case you are ensured of being able to get upclose to your subject.

This same list can be shot just as well

with a Sea and Sea 16 mm lens. It is a great buy for the money.

A Nikonos 20 mm lens or Sea and Sea 20 mm lens, or even a 24 mm or 28 mm lens, is often a better choice for any subject that is difficult to get close to. These types of subjects, when photographed with a lens that has a wider angle of acceptance, like the Nikonos 15 mm, tend to appear too small in your frame. The 20, 24 and 28 mm lenses make it easier to fill a pleasing percentage of your frame with medium-sized subjects

that tend to keep a little distance between themselves and you. Also, if you have only one dive or one day, I'd suggest taking your chances with medium-sized subjects, such as Blue Sharks, Caribbean Reef Sharks, Scalloped Hammerheads, and a variety of rays and sea lions with lenses that have a slightly narrower angle of acceptance than the 94 degrees covered by a Nikonos 15 mm lens.

My advice is to avoid getting

caught in the trap of thinking that a 20, 24 or 28 mm is a poor man's compromise for the wider lens that you really want to have. That is not the case.

Certainly a Nikonos 15 mm lens is a great tool, but it is not always the best choice. A variety of other lenses are also excellent lenses and can be the better tool for the types of subjects and images you have in mind. 🐬

Getting Started: Help Yourself Get Better—Faster

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO improve your underwater photography is to spend some time analyzing your photographs when you edit them. I am not talking hours, just a few well spent minutes can be helpful. As disappointing as your poorest shots may be, they can prove to be the best teacher when it comes to improving your work.



Spotted Wobbegong

will discover that you, too, are a creature of habit. Recognition and acknowledging the need to change is usually the toughest part. After that, all you need to do is figure out what you need to do differently in order to improve your techniques. Usually the solutions and new ideas come surprisingly fast, but they may not come at all if you just separate your images into "good shots" and "throw-aways."

For many years I have kept two stacks of images by my light table. One stack consists of images I didn't particularly like because I kept repeating the same mistake, such as badly aiming my strobe or being too far away from my subjects. The second stack consists of some of my best images. Spending just a few minutes reviewing both stacks before an upcoming dive helps the techniques that I like stay fresh in my mind. My bet is that this technique will help you as well, and nothing will help you improve like the ability to clearly see your strengths and your weaknesses.



Yellowtail Parrotfish.

A quick review of previously shot photos can be remind you of both good and bad strategies.

Most of us are creatures of habit. In underwater photography, those habits might be something like consistently being too far away from your subjects, or perhaps you accidentally cut off the edges of your subjects because you have a tendency not to have your eye centered within the viewfinder. The point is if you spend a little time analyzing why you like and don't like particular images, odds are you

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY?

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BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

DIVERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARE FLOCKING to Florida to explore the Sunshine State's 15 shipwreck preserves that stretch from Pensacola's panhandle to the tip of the Florida Keys. These unique cultural resources, initiated in 1987 by the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, include galleons, freighters, passenger vessels, a battleship, a destroyer escort and a vintage German racing yacht.

The program, supervised by state underwater archaeologist Roger Smith, started with the galleon, *Urca De Lima*, one of 11 Spanish vessels that sank off Ft. Pierce in 1715. The Florida Maritime Heritage Trail

The *Half Moon*

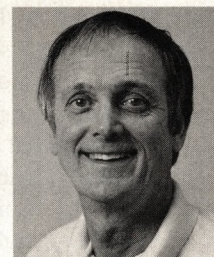
grew and prospered as more shipwrecks were added at strategic points along the 1,000 mile coastline. Although some of the ships were sunk as artificial reefs, most were victims of fires, storms or collisions.

Historically, the *Half Moon*—a two-masted German

schooner that raced under 15,000 square feet of canvas—remains one of the most fascinating on the trail. Built in 1908, the 154-foot-long sailboat, racing as the *Germania*, won the coveted Kaiser's Cup. In 1914, at the outset of World War I, she was seized by the British while docked at Southampton, England. Renamed *Exen*, the sleek craft was sold at auction in 1917 and sailed by her owner to New York.

Sold again in 1921, this time to Gordon Woodbury, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Navy, the yacht was refitted lavishly and renamed *Half Moon*. Woodbury, after a life-threatening experience in a storm off the Virginia Capes, stripped the vessel and sold it to a New York entrepreneur who cut off the keel and auctioned the hull for scrap.

Towed to Florida and moored in the Miami River, the once proud schooner sank after the hurricane of 1926. Raised shortly thereafter by Ernest Smiley of Miami, the derelict was refitted, moored offshore, and



After enduring WW I and two deadly storms, the *Half Moon* ran aground in 1930.



used as a fishing barge and cabaret. Smiley abandoned the *Half Moon* during a fierce storm in 1930, when she broke her moorings and ran aground on a shoal.

Divers explore the scattered, coral-encrusted remains of the vessel in 10 feet of water, just outside Bear Cut, between Key Biscayne and Virginia Key. The wreckage, marked with a bronze plaque, is covered with a variety of marine vegetation. Many fish, including rays and amberjack, cruise among the hull and deck plates.

For information on the *Half Moon* and the other wrecks, visit www.flheritage.com/maritime or call Della Scott, Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, (850) 487-2299.

DON POLLARD, VIA THE INTERNET, SAYS he was showing his 90-year-old grandfather some photos he took of shipwrecks in the South Pacific when he learned that his grandfather's minesweeper, the *YMS-39*, sank after hitting a Japanese mine in the South Pacific during World War II. Don's grandfather survived after spending two days drifting on a raft, but has no idea what happened to the rest of the officers and crew, or where his ship went down. Don wants to know if there's any chance of gathering information about the disaster.

I'm sending Don addresses for the U.S. Navy Department and the U.S. Naval Museum, both in Washington, D.C.. I'm also including a popular source, the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, found in major libraries and maritime museums. One of these sources might be able to help him fill in the blanks.

WALTER BRENNER OF WAYNE, PA, watched a PBS television program about the Spanish-American War and asks, "Are the rusting hulks depicted on the show truly the remains of the Spanish Caribbean fleet that was destroyed by the United States? If so, can divers explore them?"

On May 28, 1898, a squadron of U.S. ships, commanded by Rear Admiral William Sampson, blockaded the landlocked harbor of Santiago de Cuba, on the southeastern part of the island. On July 3, Spanish Admiral Pascual Cervera Topete

tried to run the blockade and save his ships, but pursuing American naval vessels commanded by Commodore Winfield Schley, sank or forced the beaching of Topete's entire fleet. Some of these hulks were portrayed on the PBS program. Divers, mostly from Europe and South America, explore them. American divers returning from exploration of these and other wrecks have nothing but positive reports about them and their treatment by Cuban officials and citizens.

JIM McCANN, PRESIDENT OF THE NEW York State Divers Association (NYS-DA), writes, "Who says that all the good dive sites have been found?"

Jim names the *Crystal Wreck*, sitting upright in 110 feet of water near Longpoint, Lake Erie, as one of the best new discoveries. Another one is the 300-year-old *Elizabeth and Mary* (see *National Geographic*, August 2000), found along the shore near Baie-Trinite on the St. Lawrence River. Jim says that several archaeological groups are surveying sites in Lake Champlain, where NYS-

DA members may be called upon to help measure, map and document new discoveries.

BOB STERNER, OF THE NEW YORK

City Sea Gypsies, says his club donated \$1,000 to help create an artificial reef system off the coast of New Jersey. The site consists of 24 igloo-shaped concrete structures, clustered around two Army tanks. The structures have become homes for a myriad of sea life. The site, on Axel Carlson Reef, Barnegat, NJ, is 70 feet deep.

For more information, visit the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection at www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw.

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at ellsworthboyd@aol.com. Please note, Ellsworth's e-mail address has changed. If you have not received a response from a recent inquiry, please resubmit your inquiry to his new e-mail. Thank you.

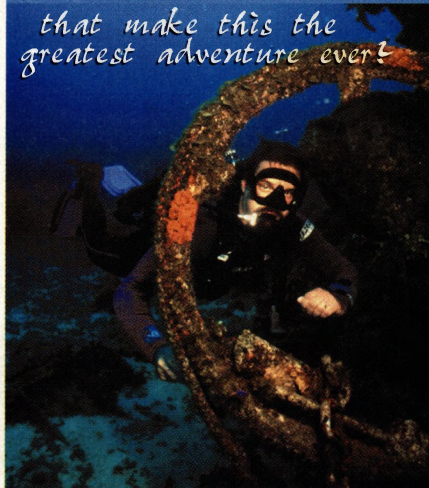
"Who says that all the good dive sites have been found?"

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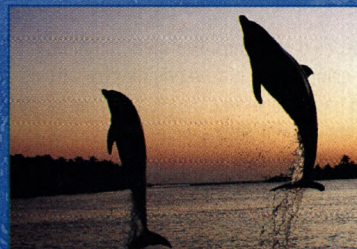
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BY RYAN ALLEN AND DARYL CARSON

SeaLife SportDiver

For the budding David Doubilet in us all, SeaLife has built the SportDiver camera. Designed to be absolutely fool-proof, divers can spend happy hours underwater composing stunning images and clicking the shutter at will. The SportDiver's wide-angle lens is focus-free from 3.5 feet to infinity and a built-in flash gives a touch of fill light when it's needed. A tough lexan housing keeps the fully-automatic 35 mm camera dry inside down to 100 feet. And, an oversized shutter release makes handling easier when wearing gloves. The SportDiver is also compatible with the full line of SeaLife accessories, so users can upgrade the system as they come closer to achieving Doubilet-level consciousness.

SeaLife: (800) 257-7742, www.sealife-cameras.com 🐟



Goldcowrie Underwater Color Note Cards

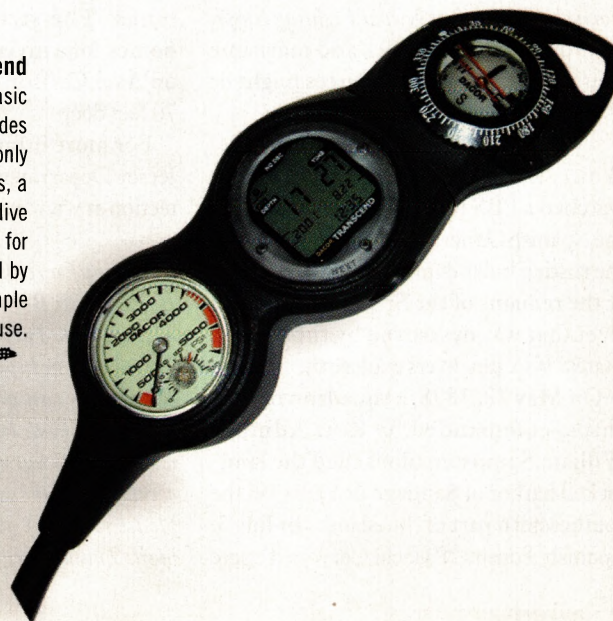
Miss Manners, Martha Stewart and Oprah all agree, sending a note card is an excellent way to make someone feel guilty about not staying in touch. And, thanks to professional underwater photographer Sara Shoemaker, you can do it in complete underwater style. Her new card line, Underwater Color, features six striking images, packaged in a set with 12 cards and envelopes (two cards of each image). Images include an anemone fish in the Solomon Islands, a French Angelfish in Belize and a Green Sea Turtle in the Cayman Islands. In addition, each card is printed with a short description of the animal featured.

Goldcowrie: (310) 449-1182, www.goldcowrie.com 🐟

Dacor Transcend

Dacor's 3-in-1 air/nitrox dive computer, the Transcend, can be changed from basic air computer to nitrox computer to bottom timer before or between dives. All modes can be set to show either full display for all features or a minimal display with only the critical data visible. Other features include adjustable algorithm settings, a backlight that changes color from green to red in warning situations and an 80-dive memory. Also, using the PC software, divers can access a reset switch that allows for computer sharing. Fully operational down to 325 feet, the Transcend is powered by user-replaceable batteries and can be used in the console pictured or as a simple wrist model. The console features a built-in compass that swivels for easy use.

Dacor: (800) 323-0463, www.divedacor.com 🐟



Apeks ATX 200

The ATX 200 regulator has an over-balanced first stage that increases inter-stage pressure as you go deeper to compensate for the denser air. The first stage comes standard with a "dry" environmental sealing system that eliminates the need for silicone oil or grease filling. The layout of the first stage, with its upswept ports, allows for ideal positioning of the hoses. The ATX 200 second stage is smaller and 25 percent lighter than its TX predecessor, lessening jaw fatigue and drag.

The second stage uses a pneumatically balanced valve system and is diver-adjustable. An improved exhaust gas flow reduces exhalation resistance.

Apeks: (760) 597-5000, www.aqualung.com or www.sea-quest.com 🐟



Designated Diver Apparel

If you're looking for something a little classier in dive apparel than the common brand of "Divers-Do-It-Deeper" T-shirts, consider the full line of scuba duds from Designated Diver. Pictured is the Shark on Denim soft cotton, pigment-dyed tee, with color-coordinated screen print and detailed embroidery. Other colors and designs include Manatees, clownfish, Mantas and more. Canvas washed, pigment-dyed cotton cargo shorts with seven-inch inseam feature an embroidered dive flag and are perfect for a dockside dinner. Finally, to tame the locks after a full day of wind-blown fun, is the cotton twill, low-profile cap with adjustable strap and brass colored buckle. Pictured is the khaki on navy design. Also available in denim and black.

Designated Diver: (904) 797-9469, www.designateddiver.com 🐟

Aqua Lung V-TEK Fin

The many metamorphoses of the split-fin design finds its latest incarnation as the V-TEK from Aqua Lung. Made of a special polyurethane material, it has outstanding snap retention. This means that after thousands of kick cycles, it gives you just as much punch as on Day One. Resistant to ultraviolet light (to stave off discoloration and weakening) the V-TEK also contains a "microbe immune" property that helps it resist warping, scuffing and deterioration. And, of course, the split-fin design increases thrust while decreasing diver fatigue. Water moves more efficiently across the blade surface (there's not the cavitation associated with solid blades), so divers will generally use less air while traveling faster. The V-TEK fins are available in two colors: blue and black; and come in three sizes: small, medium and large.

Aqua Lung: (800) 775-3483, www.aqualung.com 🐟





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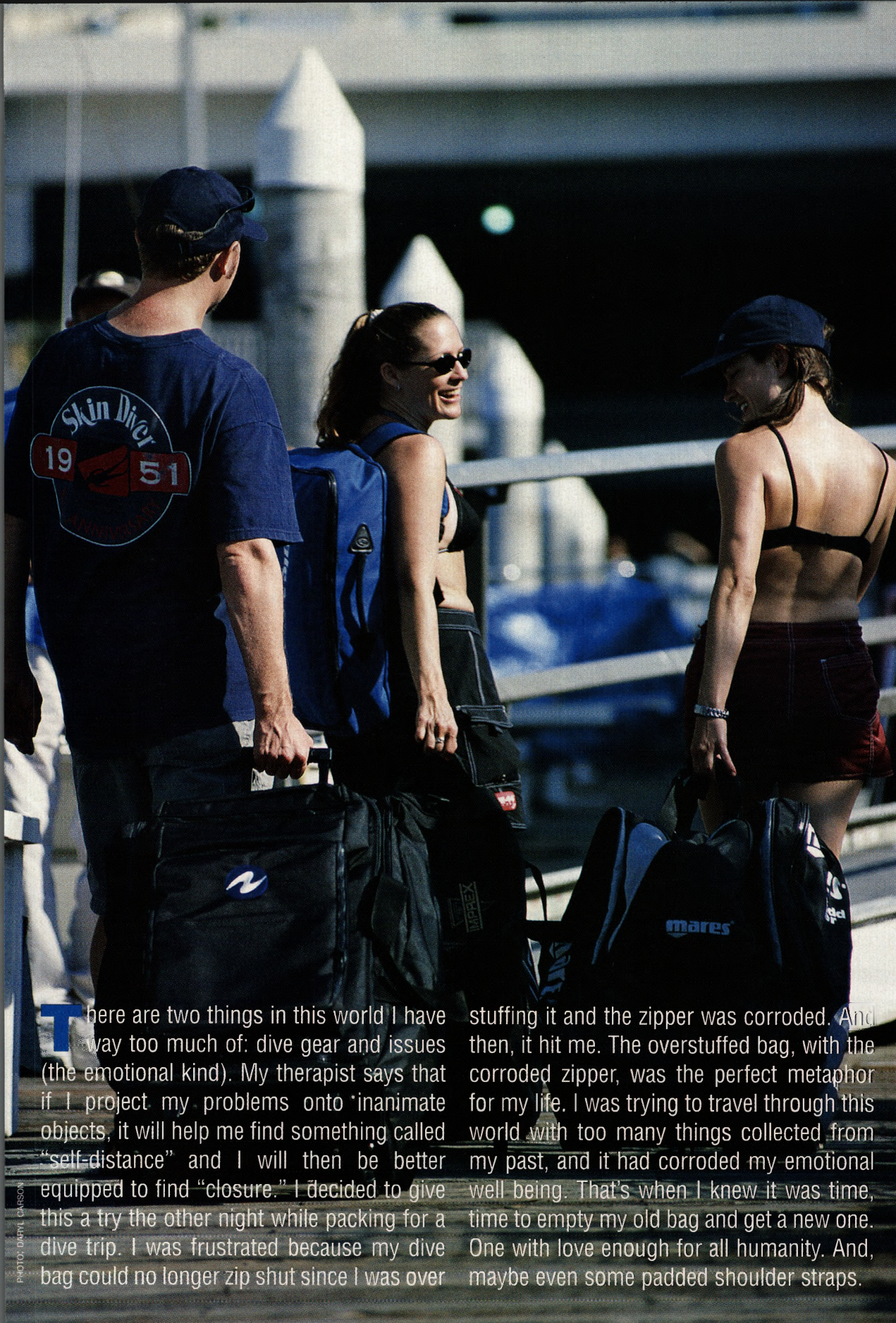


PHOTO: DARYL CARSON

There are two things in this world I have way too much of: dive gear and issues (the emotional kind). My therapist says that if I project my problems onto inanimate objects, it will help me find something called “self-distance” and I will then be better equipped to find “closure.” I decided to give this a try the other night while packing for a dive trip. I was frustrated because my dive bag could no longer zip shut since I was over

stuffing it and the zipper was corroded. And then, it hit me. The overstuffed bag, with the corroded zipper, was the perfect metaphor for my life. I was trying to travel through this world with too many things collected from my past, and it had corroded my emotional well being. That’s when I knew it was time, time to empty my old bag and get a new one. One with love enough for all humanity. And, maybe even some padded shoulder straps.

59,856 CUBIC INCHES OF SPACE

by Daryl Carson



Stahlsac XL Dive Cargo Pack

The steamer trunk of dive bags, Stahlsac's XL Dive Cargo Pack can haul all your scuba gear and maternal guilt with room to spare. Built with "senior ballistic cloth," it's tough as nails, yet has a padded interior to protect what you value most. The massive main compartment is bordered on both sides by fin pockets. Two outer compartments, three to four inches deep, and perfect for dive tools, Texas and the like. A retractable handle makes the whole package easy to pull on two Rollerblade-style wheels. And, should you need to go where the concrete doesn't, Stahlsac has hidden shoulder straps beneath a zippered pad on the back of the bag.

Dimensions: 26" x 22.5" x 12"

Contact: (800) 521-2247, www.stahlsac.com

Oceanic Premier

If you're looking for a little stability in your life, try the Oceanic Premier. Extra wide wheels make this bag easy to pull through a marina obstacle course. The minimalistic aluminum handle, while not self-locking, is one of the strongest on the market, and the two side pockets are large enough to each embrace a pair of fins. In fact, the Premier graciously accommodates thick wetsuits, big BCs, and extra regulators (the regulator bag is even removable). Also, strong plastic YKK zippers mean rust is never a problem while trying to achieve closure.

Dimensions: 26" x 22" x 13"

Contact: (510) 562-0500, www.oceanicww.com



Aeris Deluxe

The Aeris Deluxe travel bag is functionally bi-polar. Two bags combined into one, the lower compartment offers the security of hard side construction combined with heavy duty off-road wheels. The upper compartment, however, can be separated (there's that self-distance thing again) to create a versatile duffel or, if you prefer, a backpack. This is a great feature when diving on day boats. A convenient retractable handle allows for easy travel, and a padded regulator bag, which can be secured in its own compartment, is also included.

Dimensions: 28" x 16" x 12"

Contact: (510) 346-0010, www.diveaeris.com





Mares Supercargo

The Mares Supercargo is a duffel bag that's, shall we say, emotionally honest. It doesn't try to be too much or too little, but for a duffel, it's got great features. Skid guards along the bottom of the bag protect it against tear and abrasion. There's a dry storage compartment for separating incompatible wet dive skins from dry T-shirts, and wheels make it easy to transport heavy burdens. And, best of all, it does not selfishly hog up space on dive boats. Empty it, and it folds flat for easy storage.

Dimensions: 31.5" x 13.8" x 15"

Contact: (800) 874-3236, www.mares.com.



Aqua Lung Aquatrek Traveler

The Aquatrek Traveler from Aqua Lung is a bag to partner with for the long haul. Tough ball bearing rubber wheels make it a steady companion on the roughest terrain (like oyster-shell driveways). Deep cargo pockets on the front of the bag are easily accessible while traveling or on the boat, and the extendable handle slides inside the bag, protecting it from airline carousels. Hideaway padded shoulder straps also make traversing stairs and other awkward areas a breeze. Finally, the vertical support system (we could all use a little more of that) and 1680 denier nylon construction makes this a tough bag that won't hold a grudge for life's little abuses.

Dimensions: 32" x 24" x 15"

Contact: (800) 775-3483, www.aqualung.com



Deep See Travelok

The emotionally mature diver understands that vulnerability is good, but only in the right circumstances. When hauling expensive gear across the globe, security is the more important concern. The Travelok is adorned with fin pockets, cargo pockets and the like, but they can only be accessed through the main compartment. This allows the entire bag to be secured by using a single combination lock (included) on the bag's zipper. The lock itself is discretely kept under a security flap so as not to attract unwanted attention. Other features include drain holes in the fin pockets, a PVC board base to steady the bag when upright, and a pull out handle for easy wheeling.

Dimensions: 29" x 21.5" x 14"

Contact: (800) 367-2626



Pelican 1620 Case

Sensitive gear, like sensitive people, needs protection. Pelican's 1620 Case is watertight, airtight, dust proof and crush proof. Equipped with rubber wheels and a retractable extension handle, it's also easy to maneuver. The extra deep case can be customized with modular padded dividers or pick 'n pluck foam. (Note: compartmentalizing ones emotions is only useful up to a point. Foam, however, has always proven beneficial.) This case also offers a safe way to vent, thanks to an atmospheric pressure purge valve. A personalized nameplate can be engraved and goes a long way toward helping you achieve self-actualization.

Dimensions (inside): 22.06" x 17" x 12.56"

Contact: (310) 326-4700, www.pelican.com



Zeagle Slimline Express

Free spirits will love the ease of the Zeagle Slimline Express Travel Bag. Designed to make a gear-intensive sport less so, this tiny bag is part of the Zeagle Ultralight Travel system. The bag, which is a scant 4.5 inches thick, can easily hold a Zeagle BC, reg (with instruments), mask, snorkel and fins. There's even room enough for a dive skin. Available in three colors (blue, black and red) there is also a zippered external compartment, and stowaway padded shoulder straps. This bag, and its larger cousin, the Express Bag (which holds two sets of gear), are perfect carry-ons for flying.

Dimensions: 16" x 20" x 4.5"

Contact: (813) 782-5568, www.zeagle.com



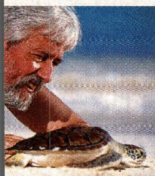
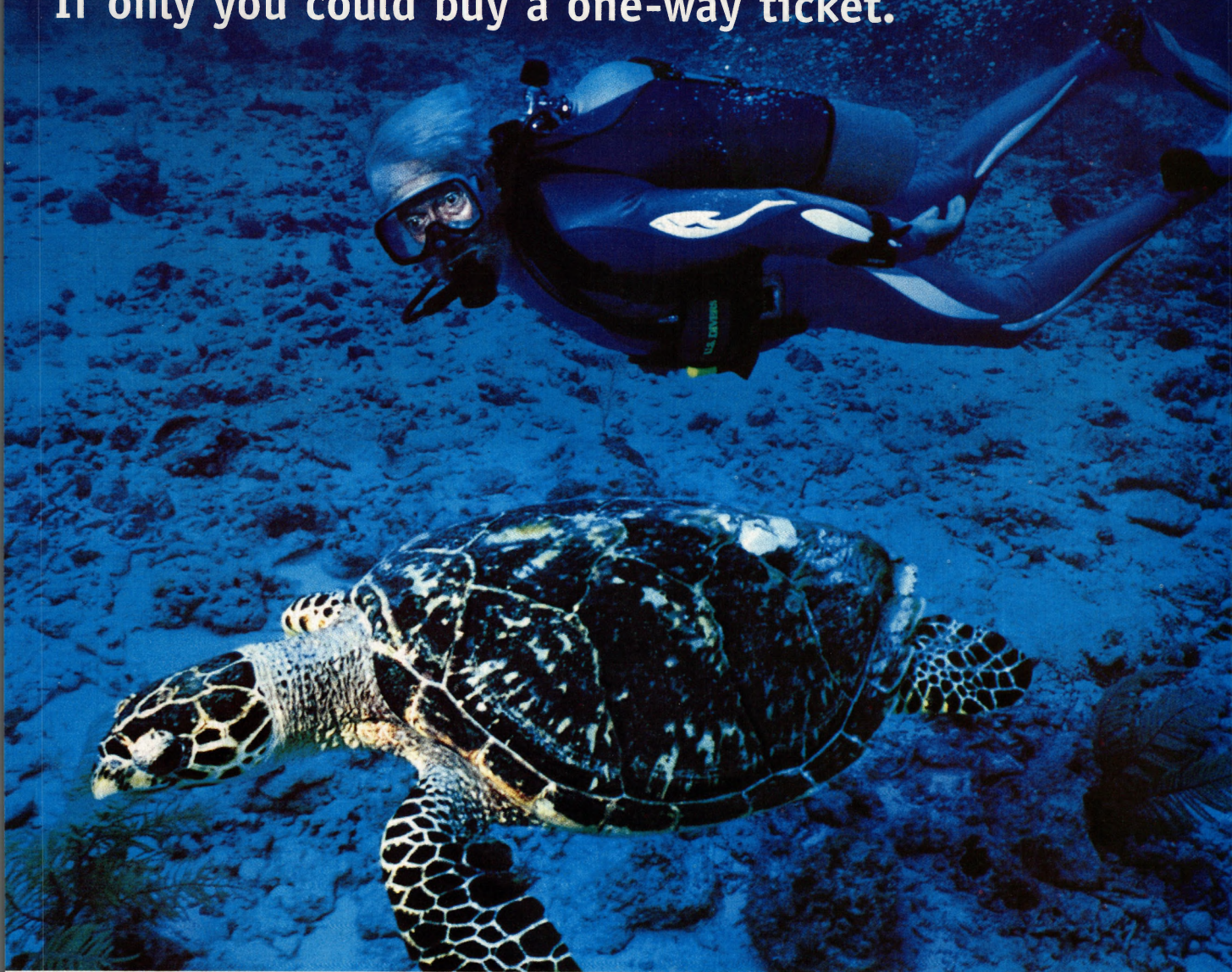
Tusa RB-1 Roller Duffel

Happiness in travel, as in life, is a light load and a great destination. The Tusa RB-1 Roller Duffel Bag is just the thing for emotionally healthy warm water divers. Made of 620 denier polyester, its simple duffel design is low on frills and high on functionality. This is a bag that will really open up to you, thanks to a well-designed zipper flap. The bottom is padded and stiff, making the RB-1 easy to tow on its two low-profile wheels. The absence of an extendable handle means more interior cargo space, and the single fin pocket is just large enough to get the job done. A smaller accessory compartment on one end of the bag is perfect for dive tables, slates or a small save-a-dive kit. Now, how about a hug? 🐟

Dimensions: 30" x 17" x 14"

Contact: (562) 498-3708, www.tusa.com

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—Jean-Michel Cousteau, official spokesperson for the Cayman Islands.

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Making knee-jerk decisions during a dive can send you down a path of destruction.



There's No Situation You Can't Make Worse

BY KARL SHREEVES

THE ALARM DROWNS OUT CONVERSATION ON THE flight deck; the space shuttle is in trouble. In command, astronaut John Young mashes the flashing red Master Alarm indicator to restore quiet.

"SM Alert, System SM1. Looks like Bus 2CA failure," reports Flight Simulation Supervisor Bill Todd, checking the computer CRTs from the pilot's couch. Todd isn't an astronaut, but this isn't really the space shuttle. It's the motion base simulator at the Johnson Space Center, where Todd and Young are evaluating new flight emergency procedures. "Main Bus B off?" That would be part of the usual procedure.

"I think we'll just leave that alone for a bit," says Young, sizing up the situation as needing attention, but no immediate threat.

"OK, why?"

"Because there's no situation I can't make worse."

Words for tek divers to live by, I thought, when Todd related that story and Young's statement to me. Here's one of the world's most highly trained pilots. He knows the procedures. He knows his equipment. If the orbiter starts to fall to pieces around him, he knows what to do immediately, quickly and correctly to get himself and his crew safely home. But he's also experienced, so faced with this emergency, what does he do? Nothing—at least immediately. And he's exactly right, because as he says, doing the

wrong thing can only make things worse.

Tek diver training teaches you emergency procedures so you react quickly and properly to air supply termination or a convulsing teammate at depth. In these situations, you can't stop to figure it out—you better know what to do and do it.

But you also learn procedures for other emergencies that, like Young and Todd's, require action, but not do-it-this-instant-or-die action. These are things like losing the line on a cave dive or getting entangled. You have to respond, and you know the procedure, but you have some time.

There's no situation you can't make worse, so instead of jumping right to your emergency procedure, stop a moment. Remember what they teach beginning divers: Stop. Think. Then act. Consider the situation, and then apply the procedure intelligently.

My friend Grant and I were exploring a cave in the Yucatan Peninsula. I was ahead exploring, with Grant bringing up the rear with the line and reel. Normally you don't let a diver get ahead of the line, but laying line in a large cave in clear water is sometimes an exception, as long as the lead diver can keep contact with his teammate and the line.

Unfortunately, it's not an exception in a small cave, which I swam into unknowingly (read: stupidly) and sur-

prisingly easily. Silt dislodged by my bubbles rained down behind me, swallowing the visibility and separating me from Grant. In minutes I was in less than two feet of visibility in an unexplored cave with no line leading me out.

There are procedures for this, but the first thing you do when lost in a cave is to stop so you don't get more lost. *There's no situation you can't make worse.* So I stopped and faced into the silt cloud. I knew that Grant was no more than 50 feet away, probably trying to follow my path.

The "standard" procedure is to use your emergency reel to search for the closest line out. But I knew that the cave topography would make such a search difficult (though I'd try it if I had to). Plus, I'd probably silt out the entire area, making it

that much harder to find my way and for Grant to find me. With Grant running his line into the same area, adding a search line in low visibility looked like a recipe for entanglement. I didn't need to make another mistake.

To my left was rock, silt ahead and clear water to the right. I realized I couldn't swim in through rock and if the water's clear, that's where I wasn't. The way out was dead ahead through the cloud, and this being a limited area, going that way wasn't going to make me "more lost." Following a compass bearing into the silt, I groped carefully along until less than a minute later, Grant and I ran into each other, mask to mask. Incident over. No drama, no close call. A moment's thought had kept me from making the situation worse.

I can relate a few tales from the other side of the coin (I wish I could say none are about me), where divers reacted without thinking, making the situation worse. But suffice to say, when faced with a crisis in space, on the ground, underwater or even at your job, take a moment to think about it, if the crisis allows. Hopefully, you won't make things worse. 🐟

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for Diving Science & Technology (DSAT) and PADI.

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EDITED BY RYAN ALLEN

DIVECLUBNEWS

New Stomping Grounds for the HammerHeads

THE HAMMERHEADS ARE pleased to announce new chapters in France, Greece, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. These four exotic locales are the latest addition to the more than 100 HammerHead chapters worldwide, and will help to introduce the HammerHeads to divers based in Europe and the Middle East.



"We are always thrilled to spread our scuba gospel on an international level," said Chief Head Hammer and Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) Executive Director Regina Franklin. "These new chapters should really prove that divers in Europe and the Middle East can benefit and thrive from the incredible opportunities that are possible through our HammerHeads organization."

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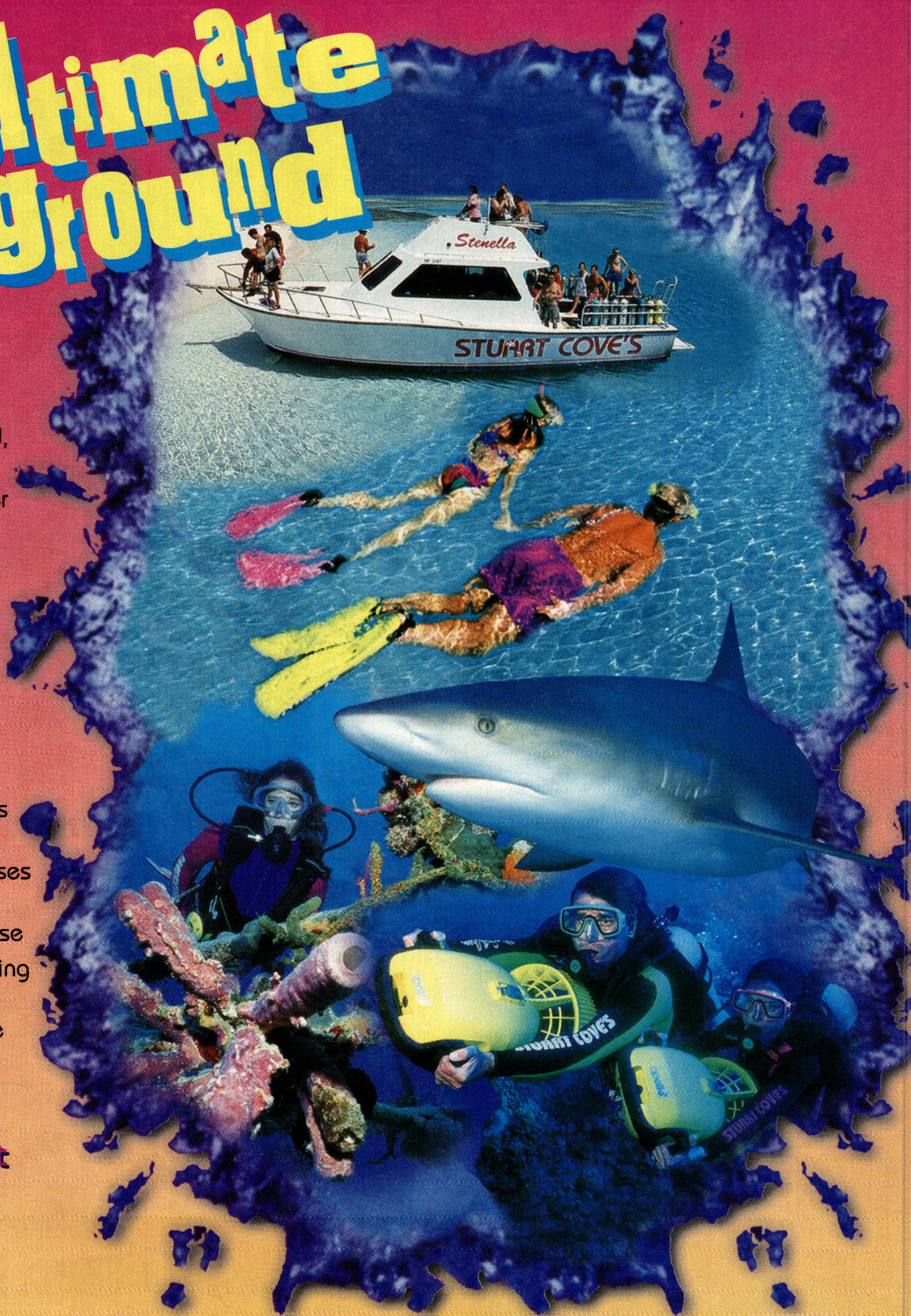


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Fun for the Whole Family

"WHY CAN'T WE LIVE ON THE ocean?" 4-year-old Sawyer Viola asked his parents, Kathy and Franklin on the family's recent dive trip to Little Cayman in the Cayman Islands. The answer must have been the same parental explanation, "Well, Sawyer, we just can't."

Sawyer and the rest of the Violas were packing up on their last day aboard the *Little Cayman Diver II* live-aboard when this revelation hit him. By this time, Sawyer, a snorkeler, and his family had been living on the ocean for an entire week. And like all divers, he was hooked.

Skin Diver Online's latest Live on Location installment gives an inside look at the Viola's family dive vacation. Parents will discover that there's plenty for the little ones to do: boating,

snorkeling, game playing, swimming and beach exploring.

Divers will get a virtual peek at Little Cayman's Bloody Wall Marine Park from dad, Franklin, as he explores just a few of the many dive sites Little Cayman has to offer. In the six-day adventure, Franklin encounters Spotted Eagle Rays and turtles at Lea Lea's Lookout; octopus on a night dive; Yellow Head Jawfish at Cumbers Caves; and Horse-eye Jacks at the pop-

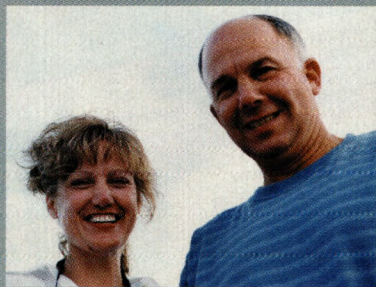
ular Mixing Bowl.

Whether you're on a family live-aboard trip in Little Cayman or on a virtual dive on SDO, the little kid in all of us asks, "Why can't we LIVE on the ocean?"

For more information on the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands and Marty Snyderman's online underwater photography course go to www.skin-diver.com.

Click and Win a Dive Trip: She Did!

Congratulations to Paula Butler, who won SDO's recent dive trip giveaway. Paula spent seven days diving with *Skin Diver* magazine's Field Editor Marty Snyderman on the Bahamas' newest live-aboard, the *Aqua Cat*.



Skin Diver Field Editor Marty Snyderman and contest winner Paula Butler enjoy live-aboard diving in the Bahamas.

And don't forget to register for SDO's current dive trip to the Maldives. You may be the next lucky winner!

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Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

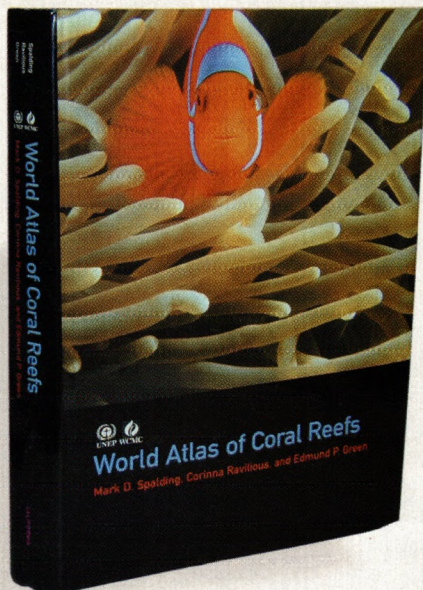
IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR atolls from your cays or your reef flats from your reef fronts, the *World Atlas of Coral Reefs* by Mark Spaulding, Corinna Ravilious and Edmund Green will tell you. The book is big and pretty enough to be an ornamental coffee table book, but is much more informative than most books on my table at home. It's definitely worthy of a place in my academic library,

World Atlas of Coral Reefs

by Mark Spaulding, Corinna Ravilious & Edmund Green, University of California Press, \$45.00, (510) 642-9737, www.ucpress.edu

though, because as a diver, I feel I probably should know something about the coral reefs on which I'm always just

jumped in and marveled at the alien life forms on and around the reef. Now, I



actually know what I'm looking at.

In fact, I know more about coral reefs than I ever thought there was to know. The book defines different types

of reefs, such as atolls, barrier and fringing, and categorizes different organisms that live on the reefs, from algae and sponges to crustaceans, fish and mammals.

Although most of the underwater pictures are lacking in clarity and brilliance, the charts of the different regions are invaluable as reference guides and more than make up for the lack in art. Also, the pictures taken by NASA astronauts from space shuttle flights are awe-inspiring and put the earth's environments

into a global perspective.

This book is a critical and comprehensive resource for anyone interested in coral reefs. The alluring hard back cover also works well, baiting guests into picking it up, after which they're certain to be impressed by your environmental awareness and maybe learn a thing or two themselves. 🐟

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Kyle Foster at fosterk@emapusa.com.

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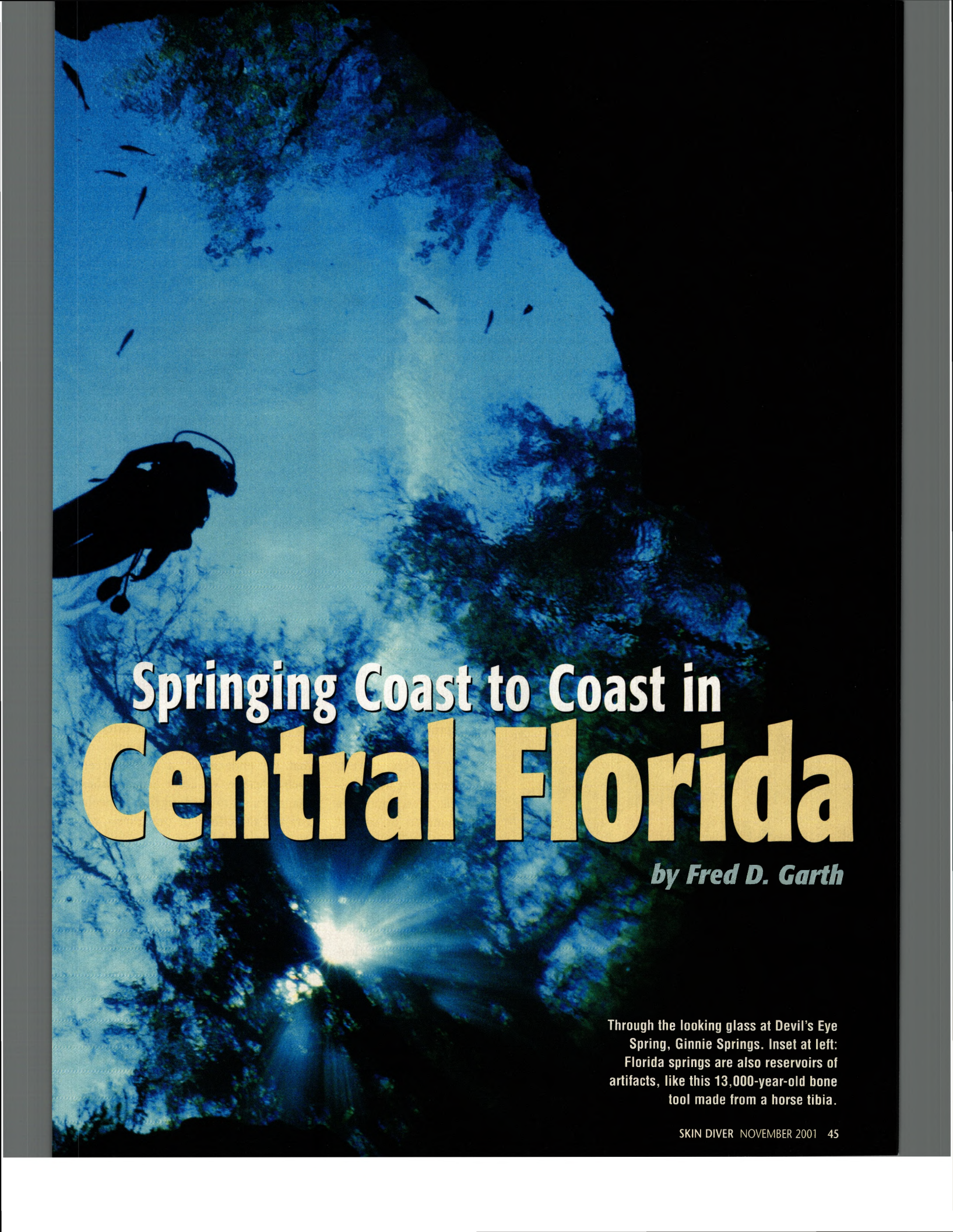
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If you think Florida is strange now, you shoulda seen it a couple of million years ago. Back in the heart of the Pleistocene Epoch, the whole state—even Magic Mountain—was hundreds of feet underwater. Then an ice age hit, water was frozen into massive glaciers and sea levels plummeted. Florida's coastline beefed up like a sumo wrestler, meaning that present-day Tampa would have been a hundred miles inland. Then the ice melted and the water rose again. Then another ice age. Then it warmed up. Then glaciers again. Then hot, then cold...it made the whole Bush/Gore fiasco seem downright organized.

An underwater photograph of a diver in a cave. The diver is on the left, silhouetted against the blue water. Sunlight streams through an opening in the cave floor, creating a bright, starburst effect. Several small fish are visible in the water.

Springing Coast to Coast in Central Florida

by Fred D. Garth

Through the looking glass at Devil's Eye Spring, Ginnie Springs. Inset at left: Florida springs are also reservoirs of artifacts, like this 13,000-year-old bone tool made from a horse tibia.

A couple of things happened during those extreme climactic shifts. When the state was submerged, it was getting blanketed in sediments—sand and sea critters like crinoids, mollusks, cephalopods, you know, all the really exciting stuff. Also, corals grew prolifically. Then, each time sea level dropped, the draining water and falling rain carved a labyrinth of underground caves.

It worked like this. When the rain fell through the atmosphere, it picked up carbon dioxide and became acidic. The acid rain (yeah, they had it even back then) got more intense when it filtered through the soil and hit more carbon dioxide in rotting plants. That innocent rain quickly morphed into wicked carbonic acid ($H_2O + CO_2 = H_2CO_3$). Then, the acid collided with limestone and WHAMMO!, it launched into full-scale chemical erosion. It was like the old volcano science experiment you did when you were a kid. Just pour simple vinegar (a weak acid) into a can of baking soda (a base) and stand back

as the bubbling foam boils out everywhere, and the skittish neighborhood kid freaks out and runs home to his mama screaming like a baby. But I digress. The point is, God makes caves the same way we made backyard volcanos, only without the crying kid thing.

To recap, rain converts to carbonic acid. It melts away the limestone and forms little holes. More rain comes and washes the holes bigger. Then all you need is lots more rain, a few million years, and you have yourself a really nice cave system. Soon enough, the glaciers melt, the water rises to fill the caves and you strap on

some side-mounted tanks, grab a couple of reels and lights and go cave diving. Class dismissed.

Fast-forward to just 15,000 years ago, the waning years of the Pleistocene and our most recent ice age. Scantily-clad humans ran around Florida, fishing, hunting meat and drinking lots of spring water. OK, so it's a lot like present-day Key West, except the water levels were about a hundred or so feet lower, the climate was arid like Arizona and tickets to Disney World cost two arrowheads and a gourd bowl.

These Paleo-Indian humans, Asiatic in appearance and ancestors of modern-day Native Americans, were what archeologists call the Clovis people, a term

somewhat based on their weapons and tools. Like modern day divers, this Clovis crowd was totally tuned into the whole Florida Springs deal. Not only did they find good drinking water there, but the springs also attracted tasty treats like tapirs, bison, camels and, of course, the giant, ivory-tusked mastodon, a favorite

Caves vs. Caverns

If you're planning to dive the springs, you can bring a light, but you won't be able to use it. With few exceptions, only certified cavern and cave divers are allowed to take dive lights into these areas. This is an effective method of keeping non-cavers from entering passageways where there is a good chance of getting permanently lost. Without a light, no one in their right mind would swim into the eternal blackness of an underwater cave. Of course, if you insist on using it, go ahead and get cave certified. It's an intense course but it will make you a better diver overall. Cavers are a breed of their own but they are also, without a doubt, the most skilled scuba divers around.

meal of the Flintstone-era family. After the Clovis, others came; the Suwannee and then the Bolen, all with an extensive array of tools, plenty of food and from what we understand, a pretty decent baseball league. We know many of these details, thanks to hard-digging archeologists and the efforts of cave divers who have discovered Indian fire pits, spear tips, a wide variety of wood-working tools and animal skeletons deep in some of Florida's springs.

These artifacts and bones were left behind when water levels were much lower than today. So animals had to climb down into pits to get to fresh water, making it easy for local hunters to kill their prey since it was pretty much trapped on all sides. Of course, it worked both ways and certainly many hunters became the hunted. That's why these holes, now springs, are significant to scientists. They have captured history in an



What would a cave man say if he saw a diver entering Devil's Eye on a scooter? "Me need one."

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 chests and submerging
into Devil's Den.



earthen capsule. One of many major discoveries is the Great Extinction around 11,000 years ago, when at least 30 large mammals were committed into the archives of time. The mastodon, its larger cousin, the mammoth, a large breed of bison, horses, camels and many of their buddies all disappeared. Why? There are several theories. Environment, disease and such, but my theory of a mutant band of space gypsies, trapping hides and furs to sell in distant galaxies is the most viable. For some reason, though, it hasn't really caught on.

As we move closer to modern times, the glaciers melted fairly rapidly (in geological terms), until about 5,000 years ago. At that point the ice had retreated to the North Pole and Florida had finally

developed into what it is today—a perfect place to build retirement communities for New Yorkers who have trouble reading voting ballots. It also became home to more than 120 diveable springs, sinks and freshwater rivers. While glacial



We know many [historic] details, thanks to hard-digging archeologists and the efforts of cave divers who have discovered Indian fire pits, spear tips, a wide variety of wood-working tools and animal skeletons deep in some of Florida's springs.

melt may have filled the early underground maze of caves and caverns, now the rains keep them flowing with fresh, clear water.

Today, Florida's springs are as varied as the names we've given them, from Devil's Ear to Ichetucknee Springs to Cow Springs. Many have shallow basins

10 to 20 feet deep, but some drop into the eerie depths like the 240-foot-deep Forty Fathom Grotto near Ocala or Wakulla Springs just south of Tallahassee, with dark passages reaching below 300 feet. Some, like Ginnee Springs near Branford, have huge surface ponds overflowing into runs which connect to rivers. Many springs are nothing but pot holes in the forest, occasionally visited by the fanatical cave diver.

It's true, Florida's Springs have come a long way, from the Pleistocene ice ages to the Clovis tribes, and finally the dawning of a new species, *carvus aquatici submersus*, known to future archeologists as humanoids draped in cumbersome gear. On the upside, the springs are more accessible and offer more services than ever before.

The most abundant of Florida's springs are "way down upon the Suwannee River." At least 40 springs line the banks of ol' Suwannee (and its tributaries), as it winds for a hundred miles from northern Florida until it dumps into the Gulf of Mexico, just north of Cedar Key.

Madison Blue

This spring is at the northern reaches of the Suwannee along the Withlacoochee River, a tributary to the Suwannee. Its complex maze of passages is popular with cavers. However, the open basin and first cavern keeps non-certified cave divers happy, too. During heavy rains, dark river water can spill into Madison and limit viz. Otherwise, almost 100 million gallons of spring water flow through here daily.

Peacock Springs



Continuing down the Suwannee, the Peacock Spring State Park has a dozen or so springs within a three-mile radius, including Peacock I, II and III, Orange Grove I, II and III, Convict and Royal—all diveable springs. The Peacock system has thousands of feet of underground passages, which interconnect with the Orange Grove system as well. Both are popular with beginners as well as hardened cavers.

Troy Springs

As we continue rolling with the river, the large-basined Troy Springs, just north of Branford, has fine diving to about 80 feet. The remains of an old Confederate-era riverboat, the *Madison*, rests on the bottom, but Troy has no cave to penetrate. Because of the large size of the spring and lack of cave, this has become a popular spot for training.

Little River Springs

One of Florida's finest cave dives, the basin is wide open with a beautiful limestone and sand bottom. The cave opening is about 15-feet deep and slopes to 60 feet, making a nice cavern dive. But then it turns left and leads back into a complex system of tunnels and a room that drops down a chimney from 70 to 100 feet. This is only accessible to certified cave divers. A sign at the left turn warns all others to turn back. Beyond the chimney a winding passage leads to a large opening named the Florida Room.

Ichetucknee Springs State Park and Blue Springs

About 10 miles east of Branford, these springs have a large main pool about 100 feet across, which helps to form the Ichetucknee River. It's popular with divers, snorkelers and swimmers, and has all the perks of state parks, such as camping, bathrooms, etc.

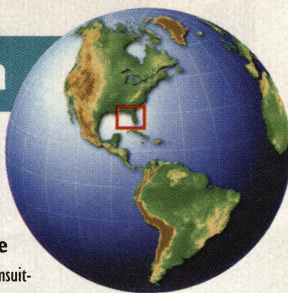


Ginnie Springs

Just west of the town of High Springs are perhaps the state's most popular springs. The Santa Fe River, where Ginnee and its companion springs—Devil's Ear, Devil's Eye and Little Devil—are located, eventually flows into the Suwannee. Ginnee is the consummate springs resort, with every facility anyone could possibly need. Its cavern is friendly to novice divers who don't have to be cave cer-



Skin Diver GUIDE • Central Florida



FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Best time to visit springs is year-round. Excellent viz, and water temps do not change w/seasons, but winter does bring cold (can reach freezing) air temps. For manatees, best months are December to March, the colder the better, when the blubbery beasts flee the cooling salt water and find solace in the constant temperatures of the springs. **Topside**

Climate: Sweltering heat and sticky humidity in summer (perfect for swimsuit-optional); cool and pleasant in spring and fall; cool to cold in winter. **Water**

Temperature: Springs: 68 to 78°F year-round. **Exchange Rate:** Dollar, one for one, except in Orlando where a dollar won't get you crap. **Time Difference:** EST.

DIVE OPERATORS: Ginnee Springs (800) 874-8571 www.ginniesprings.com • Blue Grotto (352) 528-5770 • Devil's Den (352) 528-3344 www.devilsden.com • Hal Watt's Forty Fathom Grotto (352) 368-7974 • American Pro Diving Center (800) 291-DIVE www.americanprodiver.com • Crystal River Manatee Dive & Tour (352) 795-1333 • Best Western Crystal Resort and Crystal Lodge Dive Center (800) 435-4409 • Bird's Underwater Dive Center (800) 771-2763 www.birdsunderwater.com • Plantation Inn & Golf Resort (800) 632-6262 www.crystalriverdivers.com

RESOURCES: Complete Florida Springs Map and Guide by Jeff Peterson • Ned DeLoach's Underwater Guide to Florida by Ned DeLoach • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com

They're not only for hard-core cavers, but also for rookie divers looking for a freshwater thrill, snorkelers who want to cool off and campers who just want to swim in the fountains of youth. Whether

you're a diver looking for fossils or interested in donning fur and reenacting early Clovis life, here are some of the more popular springs where you can do your thing. 🐟

Major thanks to Andy Hemmings, University of Florida graduate student in archeology and his assistance in conjunction with the Florida Museum of Natural History, to Jeff Peterson and to Ned DeLoach.



tified. There is a grate blocking the cave that only cave divers can pass. Slightly upstream from Ginnee, the Eye and Ear are primarily for cave diving. The Eye is a round shaft dropping from 6 to 20 feet. The cave entrance leads off the shaft and eventually to the Ear but the cave has narrow passages, dark water and is dangerous. Little Devil is a stunning 45-foot-deep diveable crack.

Turtle Springs

Just below where the Santa Fe meets the Suwannee, Turtle Springs begins a run of about a dozen riverside springs. Although Turtle is a good dive, featuring some long tunnels and 25-foot depths, the down-river springs like Sun, Hart and Otter are primarily for snorkeling, camping and cooling off rather than diving.

Manatee Springs and Catfish Sink

The last springs along the winding Suwannee, these spots are popular with divers. The occasional Manatee will meander into its namesake spring. Catfish has a large, fairly shallow (40 feet) pool that is diveable.

Devil's Den and Blue Grotto

These springs rank in popularity along with Ginnee and are geared specifically for divers. Devil's Den is one of the coolest looking scenes. It's a spring inside a huge cavern that is lit by the sun, streaming through a hole in the rocky roof. Lots of swim-throughs and catfish keep divers happy down to depths of about 60 feet. The Grotto is great diving because it's so huge and the water in the mas-

sive cavern is super clear. Blue Grotto reaches depths of almost 100 feet, and at 30 feet a compressed-air-fed bell allows divers to poke their heads inside, take out their regs and giggle.

Forty Fathom Grotto

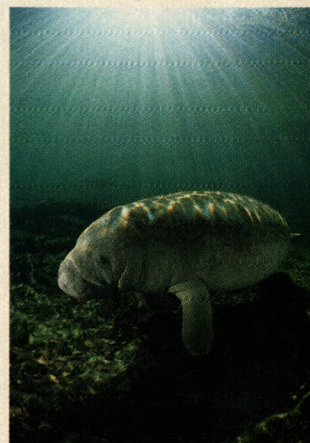
Speaking of huge, this humongous cavern drops to 240 feet and has a pool over 200 feet across. After that, it gets even bigger underwater. Only divers are allowed here, and only if accompanied by a guide; any dive instructor qualifies as a guide. As if the dive isn't cool enough, the Grotto (just north of Ocala) also has thousands of crustacean fossils imbedded in some of the walls and ledges.

Paradise

Just south of Ocala, Paradise has a small opening, but quickly expands into two large caverns. This is a neat cavern dive for non-certified cave divers and it's also big with cavers. Divers can explore both caverns, some ancient animal bones and an expansive area of fossils.

King's Bay

Just outside the town of Crystal River on the Gulf Coast north of Tampa are a couple of dozen springs feeding into King's Bay. Most are just tiny openings flowing into the bay and none are penetrable caves. Not a problem, though, because Manatees are by far the most popular attraction in Crystal River. Snorkeling with the lovable critters is highly popular, but King's Bay has plenty of water in places like Three Sisters and others, where diving offers more time underwater to commune with Mr. Manatee.

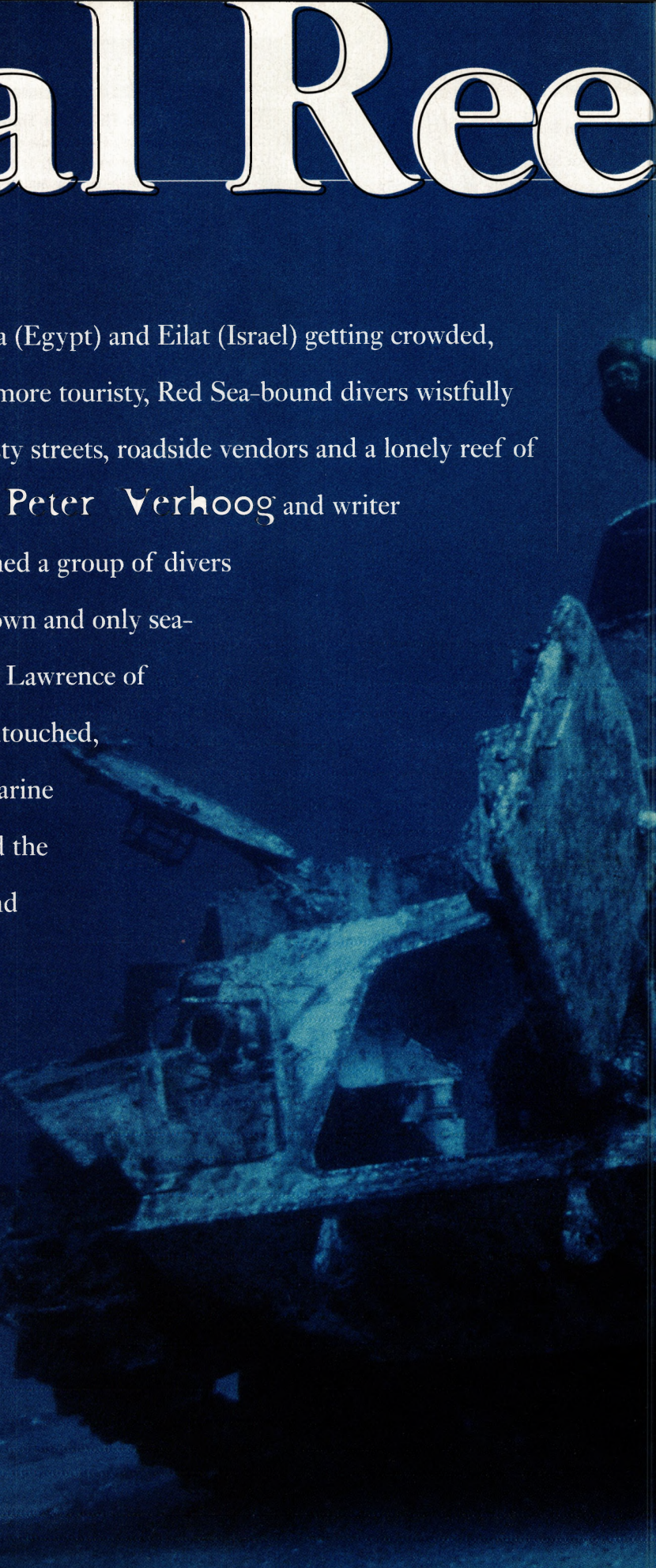


Royal Ree

With the reefs off Hurghada (Egypt) and Eilat (Israel) getting crowded, and the towns becoming more touristy, Red Sea-bound divers wistfully reminisce about the old days of dusty streets, roadside vendors and a lonely reef of one's own. Recently, photographer Peter Verhoog and writer Georgina Wiersma joined a group of divers sneaking off to Aqaba, the little known and only sea-side resort town of Jordan. With its Lawrence of Arabia atmosphere intact and its untouched, colorful reefs hosting an array of marine creatures, the diving duo discovered the realm of a scuba diving monarch and the Red Sea of old.

ALTHOUGH DIVING TOURISM IS DEVELOPING in Jordan, most dive sites are deserted. There are no crowds, just forests of corals and communities of fish. The King of Jordan, King Abdullah, is, like his father the late King Hussain, an avid diver. And it's hardly surprising that in 1995, the major part of Jordan's coastline (with a total length of 17 miles) was declared a Marine Peace Park by Royal Decree. The aim of the park is to protect the reefs from commercial fishing and damage caused by anchoring.

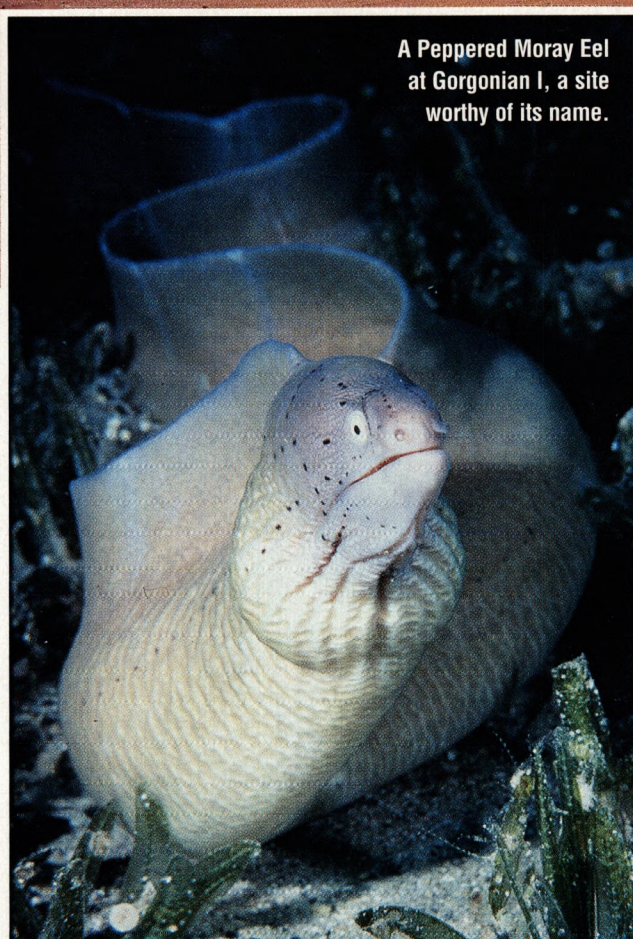
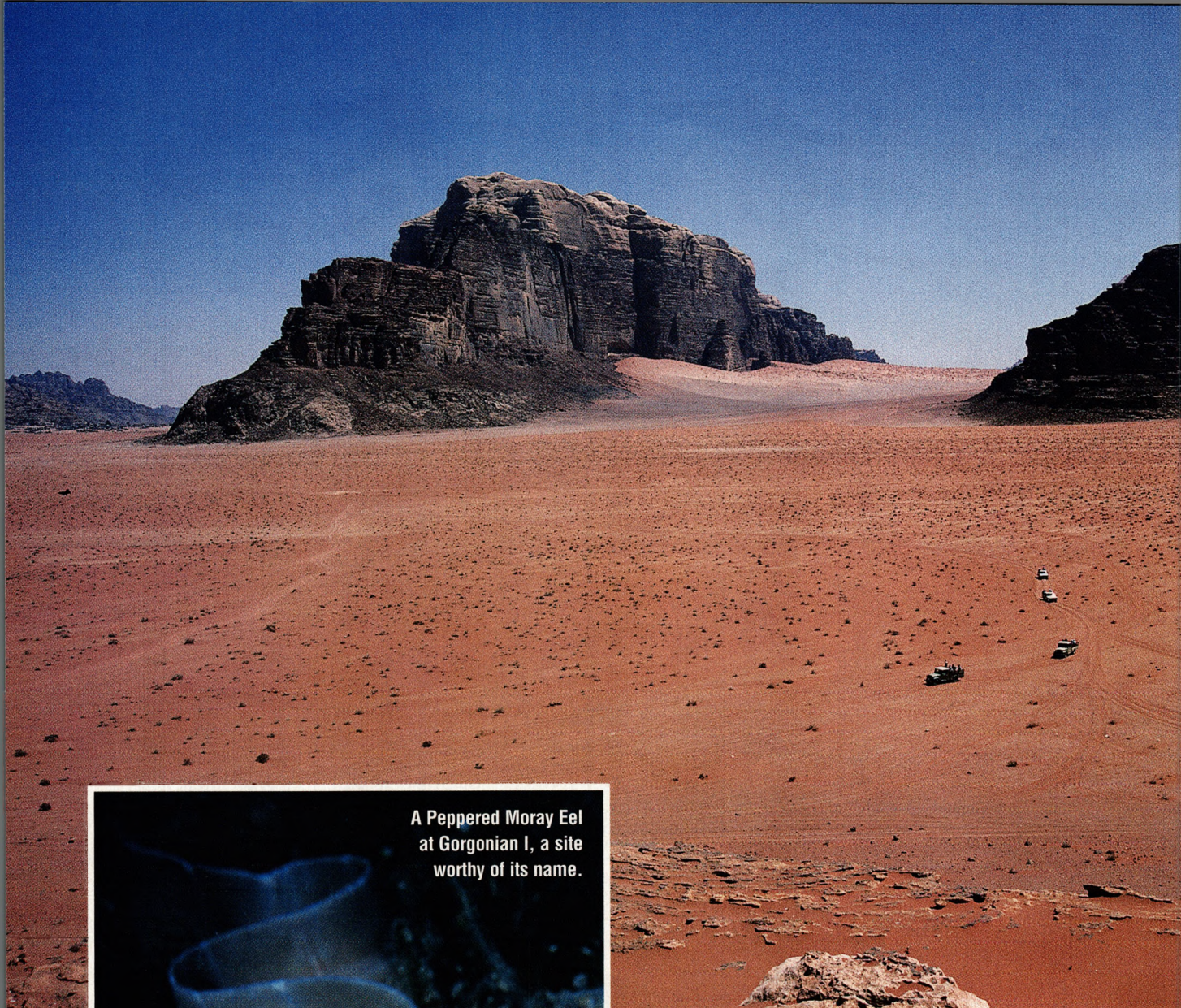
King Abdullah even provided a new artificial reef in 1999. This was our first "big encounter" at a site called, Oliver's Canyon. At a depth of 25 feet, a strange silhouette emerged from the blue. We discovered a fully intact Jordanian military tank, parked on the sea bed. It looked as if King Abdullah had parked the vehicle there himself, the gun point-



fs JORDAN



One of Jordan's newest artificial reefs, this tank was put down by perhaps the country's most avid diver, King Abdullah.



A Peppered Moray Eel
at Gorgonian I, a site
worthy of its name.

ing to the reef, waiting for advancing enemy forces from the deep. King Abdullah had arranged the sinking of the vehicle only a few months before our visit, and although there was not much to see on this “wreck,” fish were already occupying the interior, and colorful anthias were darting in and out of its shadows. Minuscule branches of soft coral were sprouting on the gun. It was only one of the many surprises that awaited us in Jordan. When following the sandy gully leading down to deeper waters, we were welcomed by a large Spotted Eagle Ray.

King Abdullah has his own diving facilities in his residence near the beach, which is unfortunately not open to tourists. But there are four dive centers in Aqaba, which mainly organize dives from the shore. We dived with Seastar Watersports, in the Alcazar Hotel near the town center. The dive center has its own beach club on the South Beaches, a few miles from town. Diving conditions are near perfect: hardly any current and 80 feet of visibility. Divers gear up on mats on the beach.

Most dive sites have a gradually sloping sea bed—shallow water covered with sea grass—where many exotic creatures hang out, such as Dwarf Lionfish, stonefish, pipefish and a

WADI RUM

Jordan has long been known as the Land of Lawrence of Arabia. History lovers can follow his footsteps in Wadi Rum, the desert where Lawrence lived before attacking Aqaba. The red sand dunes, mountains and dramatic panoramas are a must see. Go to the Bedouin restaurant, just after the entrance to the village of Rum, to arrange a guided trip. In about two hours, you can visit a gorge with old rock paintings, some natural rock bridges and Lawrence's house as well. But you can also spend the night in the desert, sleeping in a Bedouin tent. Negotiate the price first! There is an official price list in the Government rest house, where you can also stay. Wadi Rum can be reached by bus or local taxi. Booking a package excursion, available at most hotels is another option. Or, arrange a 4x4 trip from Aqaba to Wadi Rum. A spectacular seven hour journey.



Anthias and bluntnose blanket a gorgonian

large number of invertebrates, such as cowries, tunicates and nudibranchs. Peppered Moray Eels cruise the bottom, looking for a meal. It's the perfect place to make a safety stop at the end of every dive. Most reefs start at a depth of 12 to 15 feet and slope down to depths of more than 100 feet. But some sites, like a popular and as yet unnamed wall dive near the Saudi border, plunge steeply to 125 feet. The hard and soft corals at this site are in excellent condition.

One of our favorite dive sites was the house reef just offshore of Seastar. At a depth of 90 feet was a sandy plateau, adorned with more than 20 large, Black Coral Trees, an undersea oasis for Longnose Hawkfish, anthias and many other creatures. It was on the house reef that we witnessed the food chain in action. A lizardfish caught an anthia and was busy swallowing his little orange victim. Unfortunately, the predator tried to swallow his prey the wrong way: the head of the anthia was still sticking out of the mouth. As we watched, the poor little fish opened its mouth in a silent scream, but we could not help it: The lizardfish was definitely not going to give up its meal.

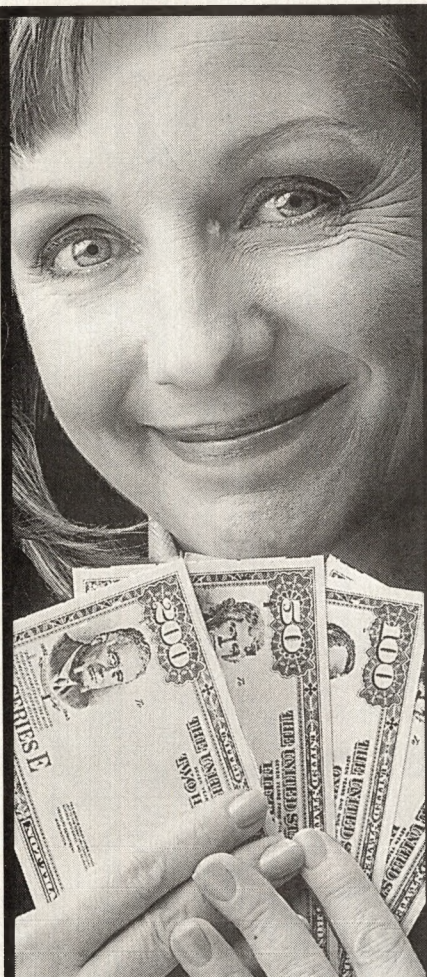
Another attraction of the house reef was a pinnacle with

large schools of Jewel Fairy Basslets, Red Sea Fairy Basslets and glassfish. We also found three red frogfish, three species of moray eels, an Ornate Ghost Pipefish and numerous invertebrates, like Harlequin and Marble Shrimp.

Similar pinnacles can be found at Gorgonian I, named after a large sea fan at 55 feet. At a shallow depth of 25 feet, there are three pinnacles in a row, literally covered in a blanket of schooling fish. Lionfish and coral groupers await to ambush their prey. Near the reef entrance, is a cabbage coral, which is regarded as the largest in the Red Sea. It is literally as big as a house. This is also a good site to see turtles.

Next to Gorgonian I lies Gorgonian II, a site that gradually slopes down to more than 120 feet, where we found several big gorgonians and a Yellow-mouthed Moray Eel. And another strange inhabitant of the Gulf of Aqaba, the Red Sea Walkman, a poisonous fish that uses its pectoral rays as walking "legs." When disturbed, it reveals the dramatic coloration of the pectoral and caudal fin.

The number of great dive sites along this relatively short coastline is astonishing. But one of the best is the wreck of the



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Skin Diver GUIDE JORDAN

GETTING THERE: Royal Jordanian Airlines operates regular flights from U.S. airports to Amman. Visas can be obtained upon arrival at the airport, at the border or at the Jordanian Embassy: Washington D.C. (202) 966-2664, or at the Jordanian Consulate (212) 832-0119. Royal Jordanian Airlines, KLM/Northwest, Air France/Delta, British Airways/United, Egypt Air and El Al also service Jordan.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Spring (April, May, early June) and autumn

(September, October). **Topside Climate:** The area around the Gulf of Aqaba has warm, dry weather, with average maximum temperatures of around 68°F in winter and 100°F in summer. Less than 5 mm rainfall per year.

Water Temperature: Winter 68°F, summer 79°F. **Exchange Rate:** Currency: Jordanian Dinar 1 JD = \$ 1.42. Dollars. Major credit cards are accepted in most hotels and restaurants and in many shops. **Time Difference:** EST minus 7 hours.

DIVE OPERATORS: Seastar Watersports (011) 962-3-2014-133 www.seastar-watersports.com

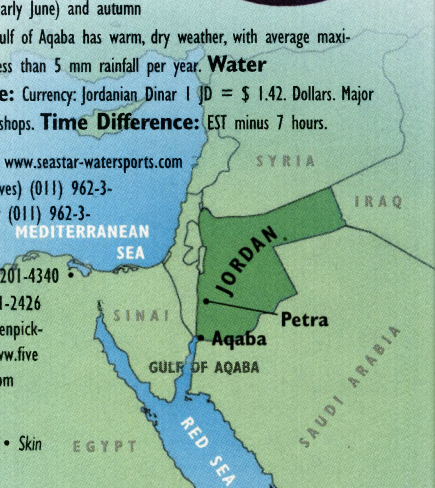
• Aquamarina Diving Center (the only diving center that offers boat dives) (011) 962-3-2016-250 www.aquamarina-group.com/diving.html • Royal Diving Center (011) 962-3-2017-035 • Red Sea Diving Center (011) 962-3-2022-323

RESORTS & LIVE-ABOARDS: Miramar Hotel (011) 962-3-201-4340

Aqaba Gulf (011) 962-3-201-6636 • Radisson SAS Hotel (011) 962-3-201-2426 www.radisson.com • Movenpick Resort (011) 962-3-203-4020 www.movenpick-hotels.com • Five Star Diving Cruises/MV Oyster (011) 202-336-0255 www.five-star-egypt.com • Red Sea Aggressor (800) 348-2628 www.aggressor.com

RESOURCES: Jordan Tourism Board: North America (877) 733-5673

www.seejordan.org • Lonely Planet Guide to Jordan www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com



A splash of scorpionfish color in the grassy shallows.

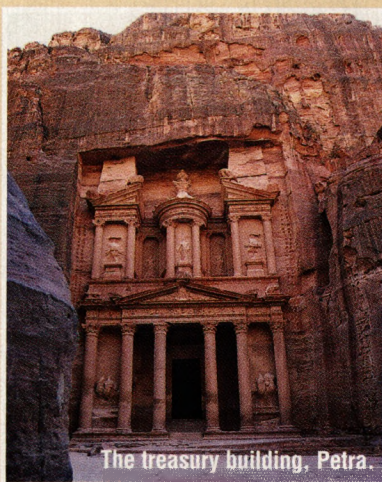
fish hang around. On our dive, a big Napoleon Wrasse swam by, and under the bow of the ship lives a family of lionfish, waiting for their prey in a magnificent garden of sea fans, whip corals and soft corals. On the side of the ship most exposed to the sun, the coral growth is phenomenal. Every inch of the ship seems to be covered in sponges and soft corals. There is a swim-through under the ship, where divers find another garden of black and soft corals and feather stars. The screw of the ship is still intact and makes a great photo op.

Apart from the diving, Jordan has much to offer tourists. The hotels are modern, and there are restaurants to every taste, even a Jordanian style Burger King and Pizza Hut. Lucky visitors can encounter King Abdullah, eating out in one of the more expensive

Cedar Pride. This 250-foot-long freighter, formerly known as the *San Bruno*, caught fire in 1982 when loading phosphates and potassium. The ship did not sink, however, and was left in the harbor for three years. Eventually, it was confiscated and then Prince Abdullah suggested scuttling it for a dive site in 1985. The *Cedar Pride* is now one of the most beautiful and colorful wrecks of the Red Sea. She seems to be sleeping on her side. Her masts are covered in abundant soft corals: schools of anthias, Sergeant Majors and other small reef



A lizardfish and its hapless victim.



The treasury building, Petra.

PETRA

Petra should not be missed. This ancient town, one of the wonders of the world, is only a two-hour drive from Aqaba and was unknown to Westerners until 1812 as it remained hidden in the ancient gorges of Jordan's desert. The city, "half as old as time," is carved in naturally pink rocks. *El Knazneh* (the Treasury) building is the first to be reached at the end of a narrow ravine called the *Siq*. The building, more than 120 feet high and nearly 100 feet wide, was the background for one of the final scenes in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. After the *El Knazneh* follows a labyrinth of tombs, palaces, houses, temples and a theater. The last building in Petra is the Monastery, a 45-minute walk, climbing 800 steps through a narrow neck of pink stone. If you don't feel like climbing, you can hire a donkey.

restaurants. History fans can visit the ancient city of Petra, and Wadi Rum is the place to go for nature lovers. Visits to the town center of Aqaba with its many shops and friendly atmosphere are a delight. Hagglng about prices is hardly possible, but every shopkeeper will offer you a cup of tea, which does not mean you have to buy anything. The friendly locals always wanted to know why we had come to Jordan. "Diving," we said. And tomorrow? "Diving!" They would shake their heads in astonishment, serving us Arabian coffee. And what better way is there to end a day of diving than by sitting in a local street café, where the scents of water pipes, incense and local spices linger, anticipating another day of diving? And we plan to make many more dives in these astonishing waters, *insh'allah...* (if it's God's will). 🐟

A special thanks to Rod, Hew, Nabeel and Patrick of the Seastar Dive Center.

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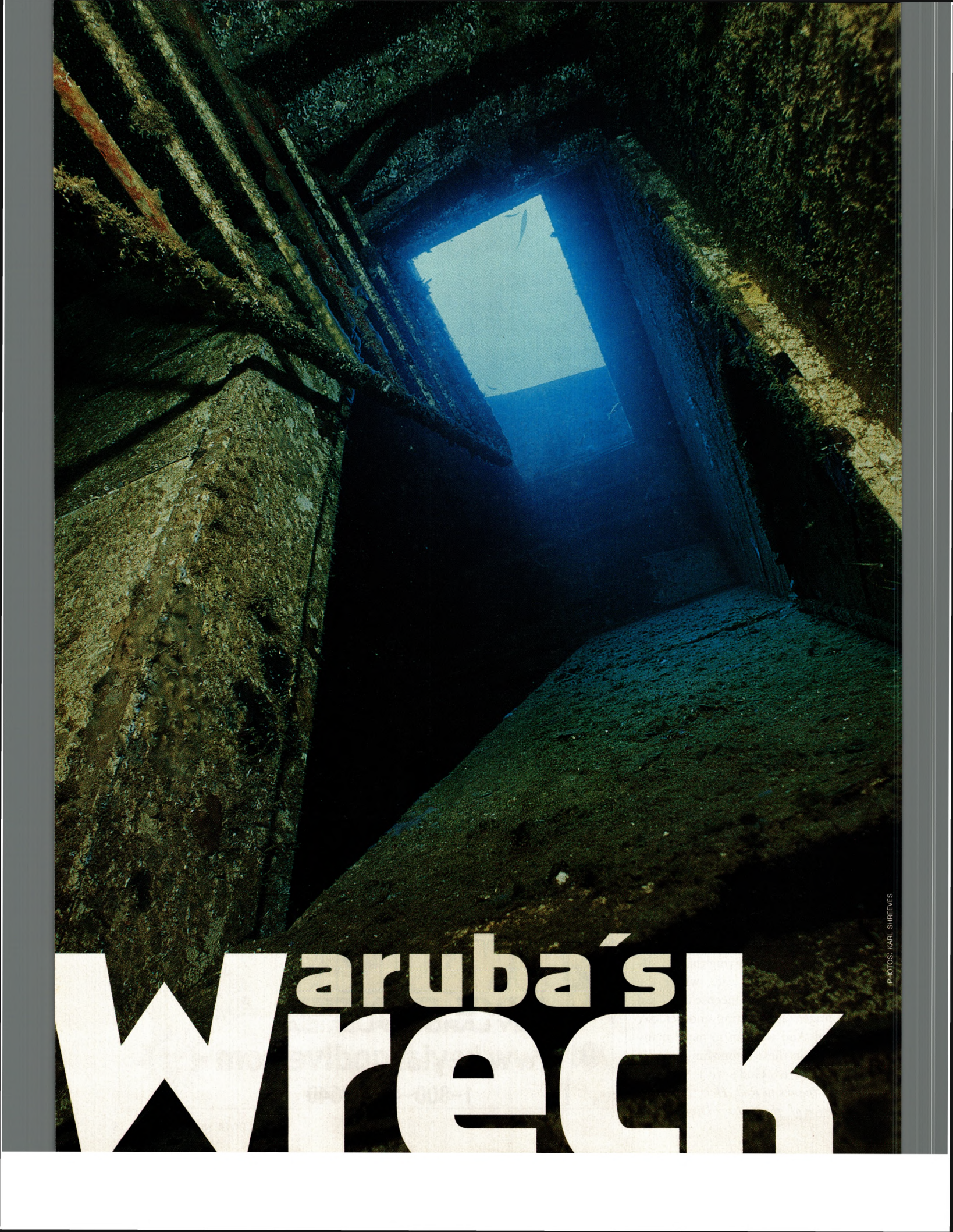
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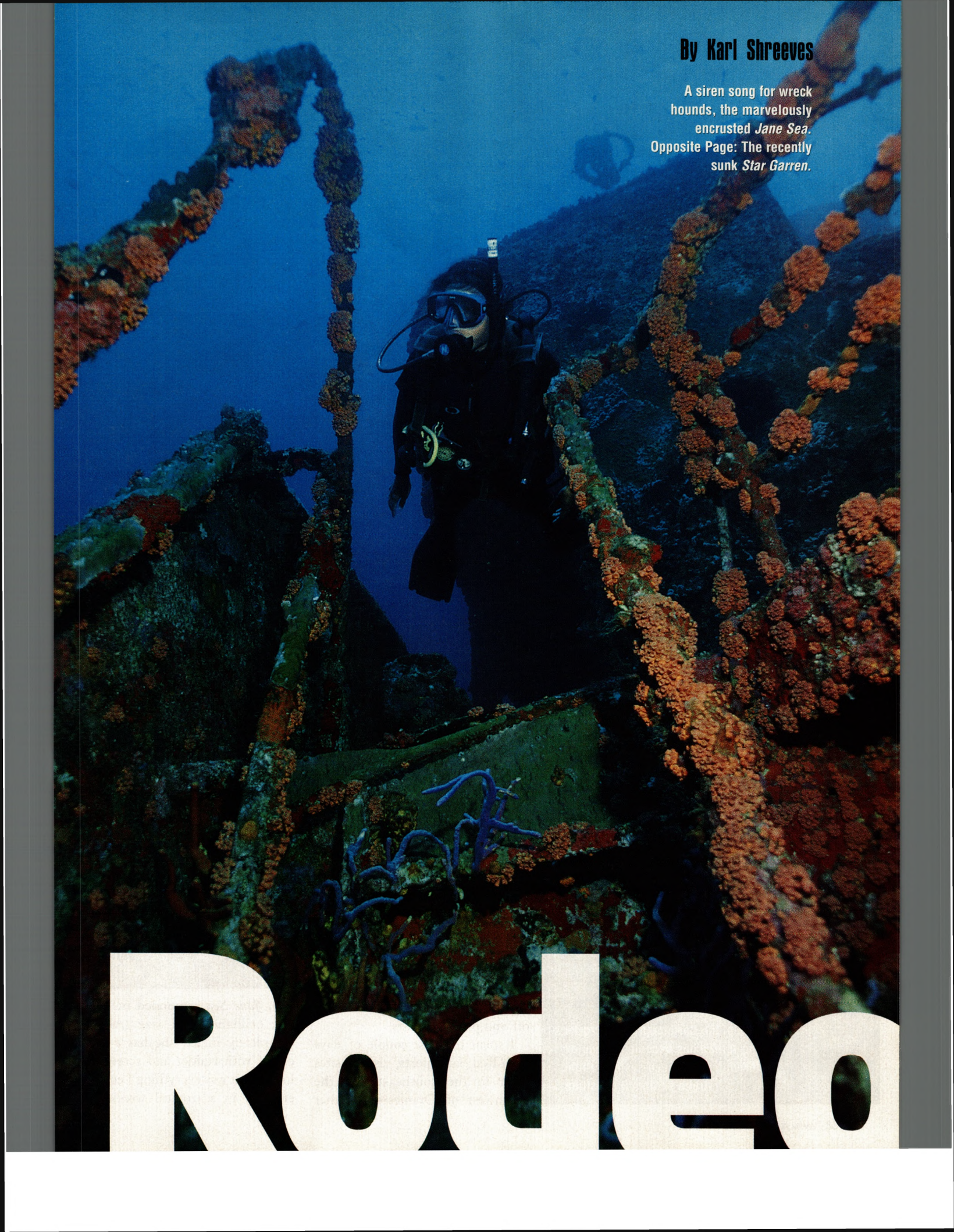
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Waruba's Wreck

PHOTOS: KARL SHREEVES

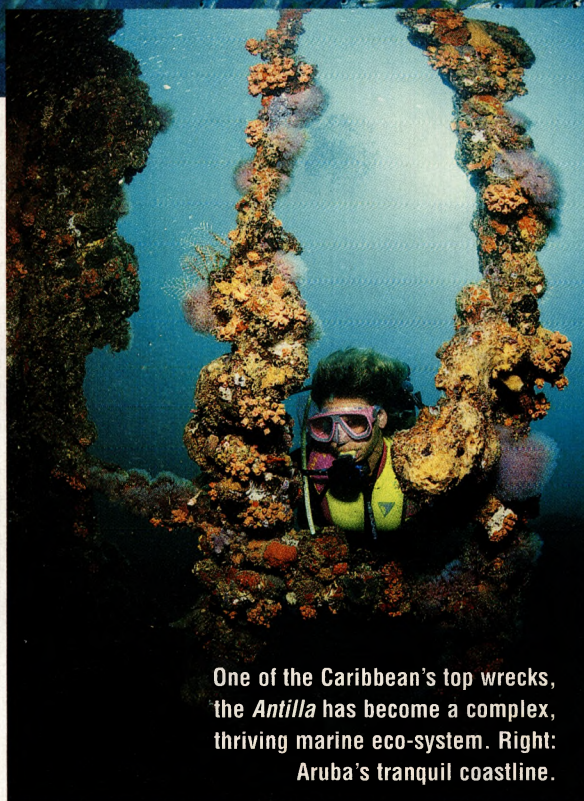
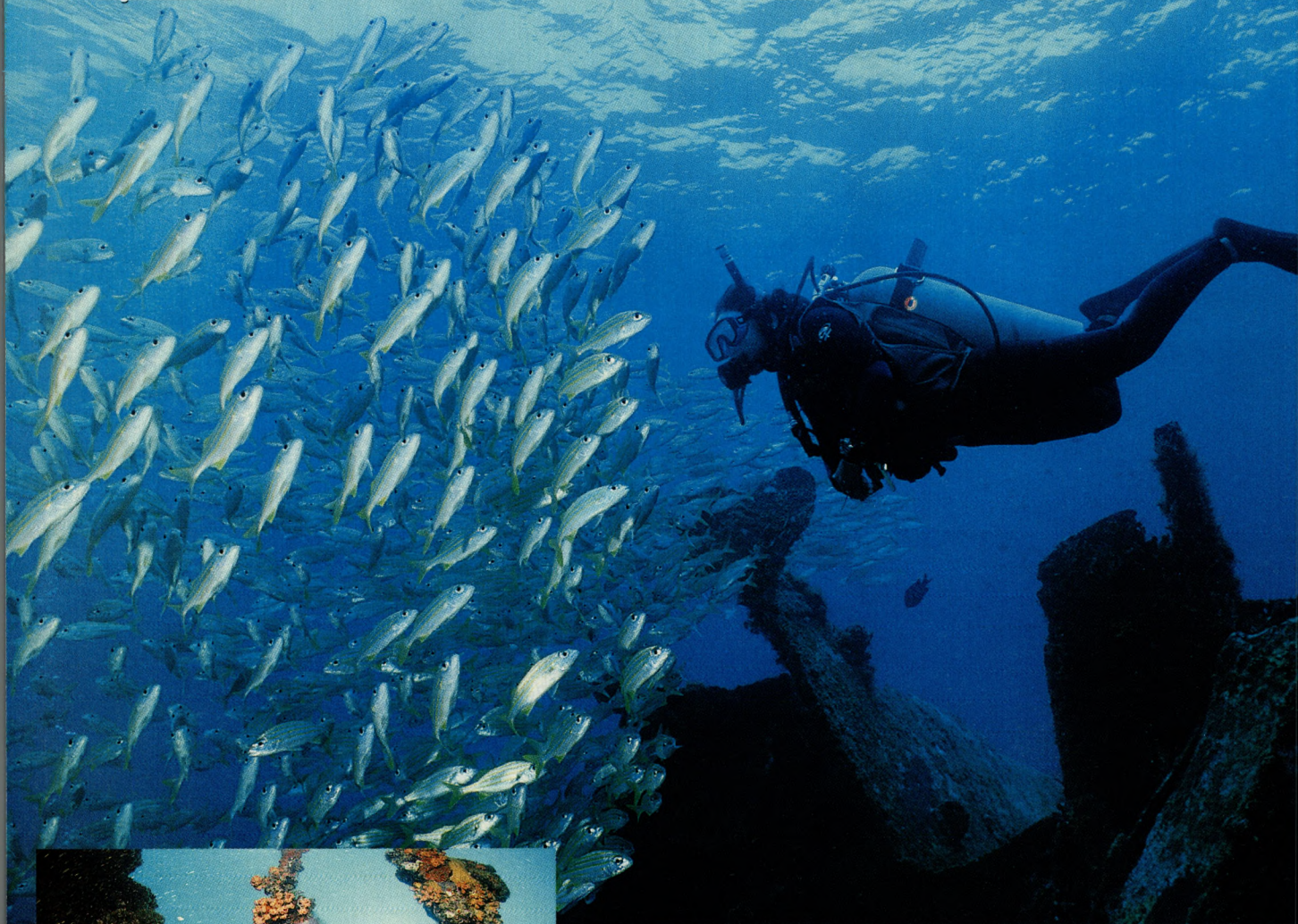
A full-page photograph of a scuba diver in a black wetsuit and mask, exploring a shipwreck. The wreck is heavily encrusted with orange and red coral. The diver is positioned in the center, looking towards the camera. The background is a deep blue ocean.

By Karl Shreeves

A siren song for wreck hounds, the marvelously encrusted *Jane Sea*.
Opposite Page: The recently sunk *Star Garren*.

Rodeo

Destroyed by a German U-boat, the *Pedernales* is now home to huge schools of fish.



One of the Caribbean's top wrecks, the *Antilla* has become a complex, thriving marine eco-system. Right: Aruba's tranquil coastline.

The Underwater Scenery, Now That I've Seen It

The airport is about 10 minutes from Oranjestad, Aruba's main city and the island's focal point. I stayed at the Sonesta Beach Resort, part of Seaport Village, which is an upscale resort community with a hotel, two casinos, shopping malls, restaurants and its own private island where they cater to water sports. To say the Sonesta Resort Hotel is on the water is an understatement. A canal comes into the hotel, enabling the Sonesta Island complimentary water taxi to drop off and pick up guests.

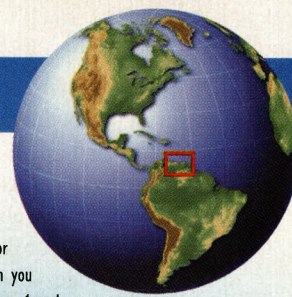
I spent the first couple of days with Red Sail Sports, visiting sites both to the southeast and the northwest of Oranjestad. Rather

than head for a coral reef, which is what most Caribbean islands brag about, we began with *Jane Sea*, a coral-covered freighter sitting almost upright in about 80 feet of water. I'm an avid wreck hound and



still, *Jane Sea* astounded me with her brilliance and size. Almost completely intact, she has a large crane, with rudder and screw still in place. It was everything I consider ideal in a tropical wreck: big

Skin Diver GUIDE • ARUBA



GETTING THERE: ALM and American Airlines provide service to Aruba. U.S. and Canadian citizens need only proof of citizenship and a round-trip airline ticket.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round. It's below the hurricane belt, so major tropical storms are rare. The spring tends to be a bit wetter (mosquito season), but no matter when you go, you're unlikely to hit a long string of bad weather or poor diving conditions. **Topside Climate:** In the mid 80s°F most of the year. Aruba is arid, but what rain it does get is primarily between October and February. Trade winds keep things remarkably cool, especially in the evenings. **Water**

Temperature: In the low to mid 80s°F year-round. **Exchange Rate:** National currency is the Aruban florin, which has an exchange rate of about 1.75 to the U.S. dollar. Most places accept \$U.S. Save \$20 U.S. for departure tax. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time. Aruba does not observe daylight-saving.

RESORTS & DIVE OPERATORS: Pelican Adventures 011 (297) 872302 www.pelican-aruba.com • Red Sail Sports (877) REDSAIL www.redsail.com • Aruba Sonesta Beach Resort (800) SONESTA www.arubasonesta.com • Aruba Pro Dive 011 (297) 825520 www.arubaprodiver.com • Mermaid Sport Divers 011 (297) 835546 www.scubadivers-aruba.com • Native Divers Aruba 011 (297) 864763 nativedivers@setarnet.aw • Unique Sports of Aruba 011 (297) 860096 www.visitaruba.com/uniquesports

RESOURCES: Aruba Board of Tourism www.arubatourism.com • Lonely Planet Guide to Aruba www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com



enough that it's a wreck you can explore and penetrate, but small enough that you can tour its length in a single dive.

Jane Sea is just the start of a wreck diver and photographer's

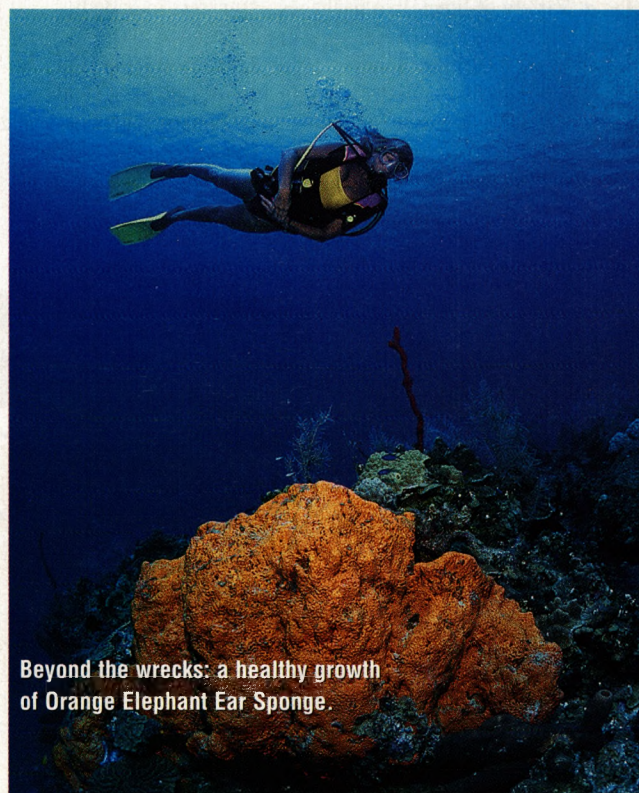
found a massive school of silversides; they swirled around us like we were swimming through quicksilver. With a shallow depth and a "natural" origin, *Antilla*'s a great wreck for the novice and experienced wreck diver alike, and easily one of the Caribbean's top wrecks.

Another wreck we visited was the *Pedernales*, a 350-foot tanker torpedoed by the *U-156* in 1942 as she lay at anchor loaded with crude oil at night. *Pedernales* caught fire and went

Other popular dive sites include non-wreck coral sites like Submarine Island, Savaneta, Hole in the Wall and Palm Island.

dream in Aruba—intact ships in warm, relatively shallow, clear tropical water.

If there's any dive site and wreck that Aruba's most proud of, it's *Antilla*, a 400-foot German freighter that was scuttled (rather than surrender) when war broke out with Holland in 1940. Island lore has it that the captain and engineers assured *Antilla*'s death by bringing the boilers to maximum heat and pressure, then opening valves to let in much cooler sea water. *Antilla* lies on her port side in about 60 feet of water, so shallow that parts of her hull break the surface. She's intact, except for the center section where she blew apart. Life abounds on *Antilla*. Swimming through the forward hold, my buddy and I



Beyond the wrecks: a healthy growth of Orange Elephant Ear Sponge.

Aruba's Wreck Rodeo

adrift while *U-156* shelled the island's oil refinery, torpedoed other ships and generally caused death and destruction. The destroyed midsection lies off Aruba's Palm Beach, about 30 feet deep. She's completely broken up, but surrounded by huge schools of fish and other marine life. There's a large area to explore, making it an interesting site—a great dive to follow *Antilla*, which lies only a few miles away.

Diving with another one of Aruba's dive operators, Pelican Adventures, I

visited two wrecks not called on quite as frequently. Both wrecks proved to be real treats.

The first of these was *Debbie II*, a small tanker in about 70 feet of water. *Debbie II* is an artificial reef that sits upright, almost perfectly level. Covered with sponges and newly developing corals, you can tour *Debbie II* easily in a single dive. It's a good place for macro photography as well as wide-angle, and is a good moderately deep



You can't mention Aruba without envisioning her Natural Bridge,...the Caribbean's largest.

wreck dive for less experienced divers.

After visiting *Debbie II*, we checked out *Star Garren*, an artificial reef wreck that looks more like an actual shipping casualty than an intentional sinking.

What we found, I recommend you not miss. Massive fish schools and a variety of moray eels surround and inhabit *Star*, which lies portside down with the bottom at about 65 feet. She has penetrable passage. Some of it, like the cargo holds, is an easy swim-through, but other areas are best suited for qualified wreck divers with penetration training. Although not many dive operators have visited this wreck, I expect that to change. She was definitely one of the better sites I encountered.

Another well-known wreck is *Californian*, which sits off Aruba's north-western tip. If you're a *Titanic* buff, you may recall that the *Titanic's* distress calls were heard, but not responded to, by the *Californian*. But despite persistent rumors, it wasn't this *Californian*. Sorry. It's still a great dive, but best suited for more experienced divers because it's in relatively unprotected waters, making for rough conditions and some current.

Other popular sites include non-wreck coral sites such as Submarine Island, Savaneta, Hole in the Wall and Palm Island. Aruba enjoys healthy and interesting coral reefs, but for me, the wrecks (and there are many others) are the hot spots.

Topside Scenery

You can't dive all the time, and

PHOTO: KARL SHREVEES, OPPOSITE PAGE: GREG JOHNSTON

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Aruba's an interesting island when you're out of the water, too. In addition to excellent night life and the usual water sports, be sure to tour the island. There's a lot of history and natural wonder worth seeing, and one-fifth of the entire island is a national park.

You can't mention Aruba without envisioning her Natural Bridge, which is the Caribbean's largest. Billed as Aruba's "first tourist site," it's a popular area and a spectacular formation. (Hint: drive along Aruba's South East point—extremely beautiful and dramatic.)

Not far from Natural Bridge, you'll find the ruins of Bushirban, a gold processing facility. There's not much left, but the stone ruins are worth the stop, especially if you're a photographer looking for stark, dramatic images.

For snorkeling or shore diving, Baby Beach is the "secret everyone knows."



Aruba's beautiful Seaport Village.

Reciprocal Course

I went to Aruba thinking I knew all about the island; I left Aruba with more to discover. My short stay turned my thoughts of the island 180 degrees, and being a diver who loves wrecks, I'd recommend her to any diver who wants to explore big ships in ideal dive conditions. And with all the topside activities, including an emphasis on youngsters—several of the resorts have child programs so the parents can have time to themselves—it's an equally good destination for nondivers.

As Jimmy Buffet once sang, "Don't try to describe the scenery if you've never seen it. Don't ever forget that you might just end up being wrong." 🐟

Special thanks to Sonesta Beach Resort, Red Sail Sports and Pelican Adventures. Also thanks to ALM Airlines and Castro Perez of Aruba's Tourism Authority.

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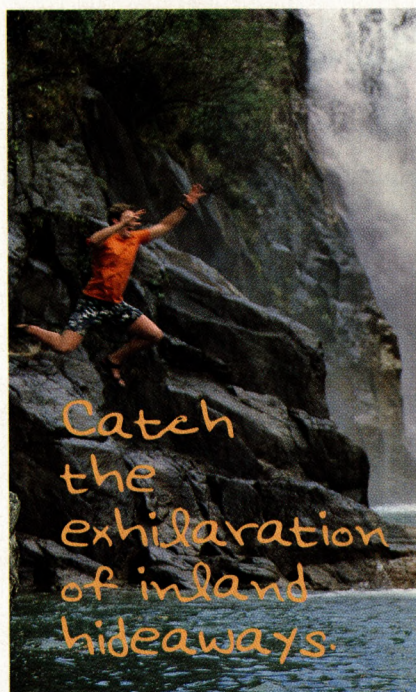
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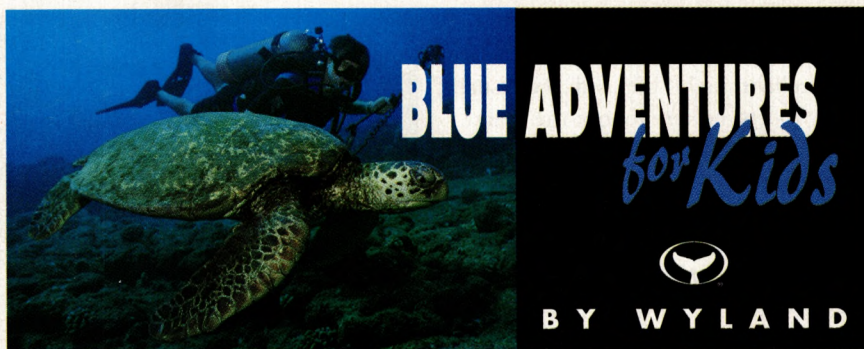
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SNORKELING SENSE

HANAUMA BAY ON THE SOUTHEAST shore of the island of Oahu has gained attention around the world for its well-protected bathing beach, crystal clear water and huge living reef coral formations. The bay itself is legally designated as a state underwater park and conservation district. Formed thousands of years ago at the mouth of an extinct volcano, it is home to puffers, parrotfish, Green Sea Turtles, dolphins, rays and another rather peculiar form of life that seems to frequent underwater parks more and more these days—tourists.

The protected nature of bays like Hanauma—and the incredible array of marine life that lives there—make excellent opportunities for family snorkeling excursions. All that's required is some careful pre-planning, a bottle of waterproof suntan lotion and the right equipment. Easy, right? Well, after taking all the safety precautions, there's one more thing to consider. I call it a smart environmental attitude. Making your kids aware of the impact their presence has on this fantastic undersea world can go a long way toward making the most of their snorkeling experience, while causing the least disruption of the sea life.

Each year, the incredible beauty of underwater parks like Hanauma Bay attracts millions of snorkelers who, without knowing any better, poke, prod, kick, collect and generally disrupt the fragile marine

life that live there. I myself have seen hundreds of people literally standing on living coral. These folks don't mean any harm. They simply haven't learned how fragile the corals are, nor do they understand how long it takes for coral to regenerate. Multiply this day after day, year after year, and you can understand why coral reefs are degrading around the world.

Then there are the people who share their lunch with the fish. I once saw a man swim out in Hanauma Bay carrying a half-eaten McDonald's cheeseburger. Bit by bit, the man flung the disintegrating burger across the water, making quick friends with a school of ravenous tropical fish. Unfortunately, the fish don't need this kind of friendship. Over the years the fish population in areas such as Hanauma Bay have grown accustomed to human contact, and it's not unusual for fish of every size to swim up to



Encourage your children to practice an environmentally smart attitude while snorkeling. Remember, you are the guest in this fragile underwater world.

take food from your hand. The prospect of this may seem thrilling, but the truth is that by serving up this human junk food, we are introducing yet another en-

vironmental complication to this fragile ecosystem. To help avoid this, snorkelers can purchase a special food at local concession stands.

To the credit of the state of Hawaii, someone figured out that even the sea life in Hanauma Bay could use a break once in a while. Hanauma Bay is now closed once a week to give the reef a

HOW YOUR FAMILY CAN KEEP REEFS PRISTINE

- Be aware that even the lightest touch with hands or equipment can damage sensitive coral polyps.
- Wear a flotation device to allow gear adjustments without standing on the coral.
- Avoid contact with the ocean bottom. Lifeless areas may support new growth if left undisturbed.
- Avoid feeding fish. This destroys their natural feeding habits, and you might be injured.
- Remember, it's illegal to harvest coral in many areas, and purchasing it at local shops only depletes reefs elsewhere.

rest. As an experienced diver—and parent—you can follow the state's lead by encouraging your children to adopt environmentally smart practices the next time you go on a snorkeling excursion. You might even spend some time beforehand identifying a few of the species that your kids are likely to encounter. Some of the names like the *Humuhumu-nukunuku-a-pua'a* (Hawaii's state fish) are fascinating and fun. Learning the names of the creatures not only helps acquaint your kids with the environment, it makes them more comfortable with this beautiful new world. And, as I've always maintained, the more people know about these places, the more they are likely to protect them. Or, another way to look at it, the next time you visit our friends in the sea, try to be a fish...or at least think like one. 🐟

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How to Shoot SuperMacro

Frequent SDM contributors Larry and Denise Nielsen Tackett explain how they get big pictures of the sea's little creatures.

SO WHAT IS SUPERMACRO? We call anything shot at greater than lifesize SuperMacro. That means a .5-inch shrimp will appear bigger than .5 inches on

the film—maybe even as long as 1.5 inches or three times its size.

Our favorite use of this technique is to create abstract images by shooting small sections of subjects at greater than lifesize. We wind up with images that don't look at all like the subject and are often not recognizable as underwater images because they rely solely on color, pattern and texture.

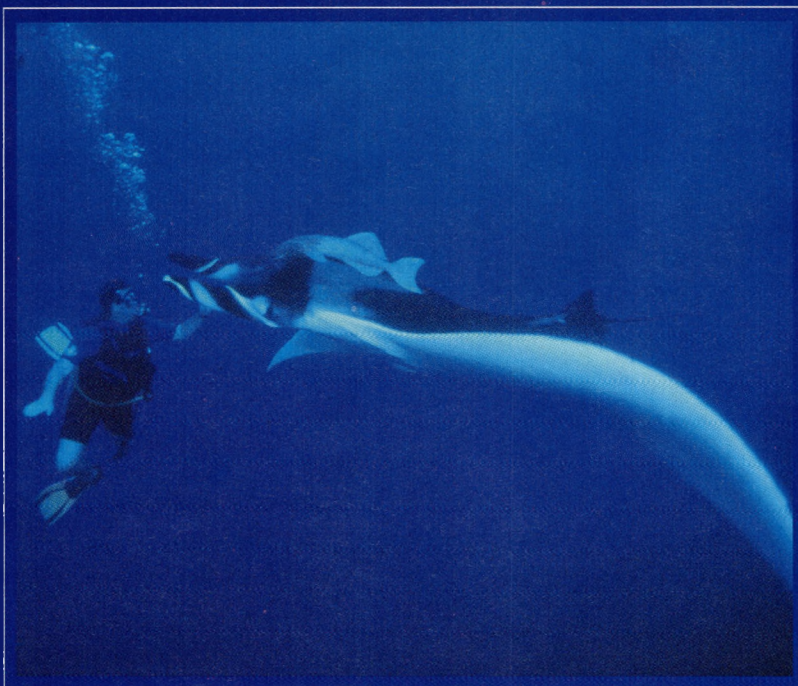
The starting point for creating SuperMacro images is a housed camera with a macro lens, such as the Nikon

105 mm Micro that goes to lifesize image reproduction. To shoot SuperMacro, you then need to add a close-up diopter to the front of the lens. Most housings have enough space in the port to accommodate a diopter.

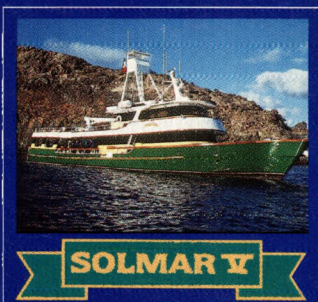
We use a Nikon 4T diopter (+3 strength, dual element, 52 mm diameter) that screws into the front of the lens like a filter. When used with maximum lens extension, the +3 diopter gives an image that is about 1.4 times bigger (or 40 percent larger) than lifesize.

The drawback to using a diopter is that your working distance from the front of the lens to the subject will be reduced. That means you have to get

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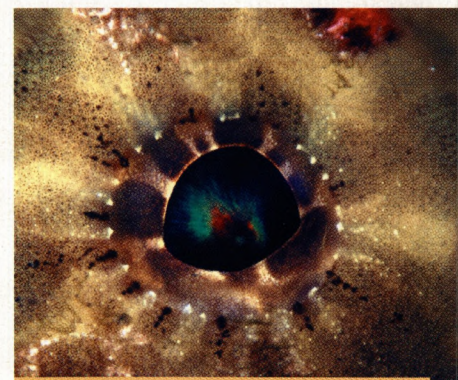
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Using SuperMacro on this frogfish's eye creates an abstract and intriguing image.

closer to the subject.

If you like shooting at 1.4X and want to go even bigger, the next step is a 2X teleconverter. This is an optical device that fits between the camera body and lens, much like an extension tube. The teleconverter doubles the focal length of the lens and the image size. Although you don't lose working distance with the teleconverter, you do lose two f-stops of light. That means if you're shooting at f8 you'll need as much light for the subject as if you were shooting at f16. You'll also need a port extension ring and special aperture gear to allow for the length of the teleconverter in the housing.

To offset the light loss you can use a lower f-stop, but remember that as magnification increases, depth of field decreases so you'll want to use as high an f-stop as possible. We generally use faster film (100 ASA) and move our strobes closer so we can shoot at f11. 🐠



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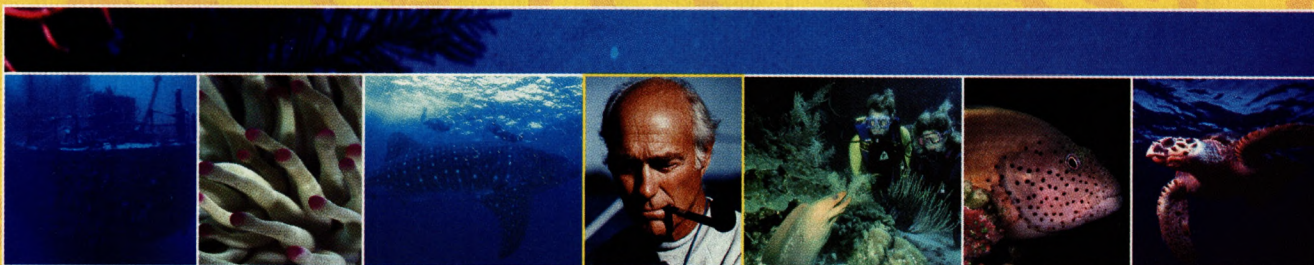
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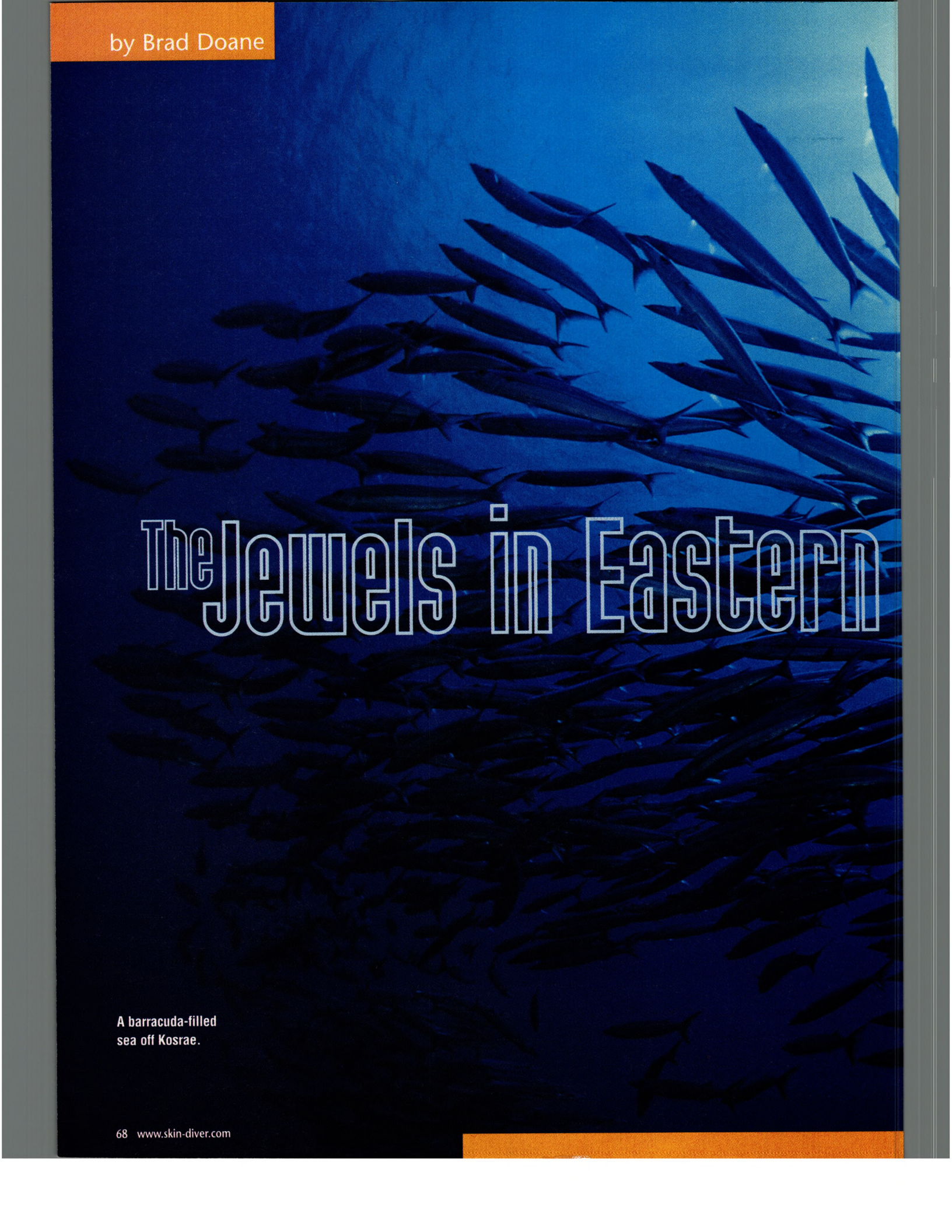
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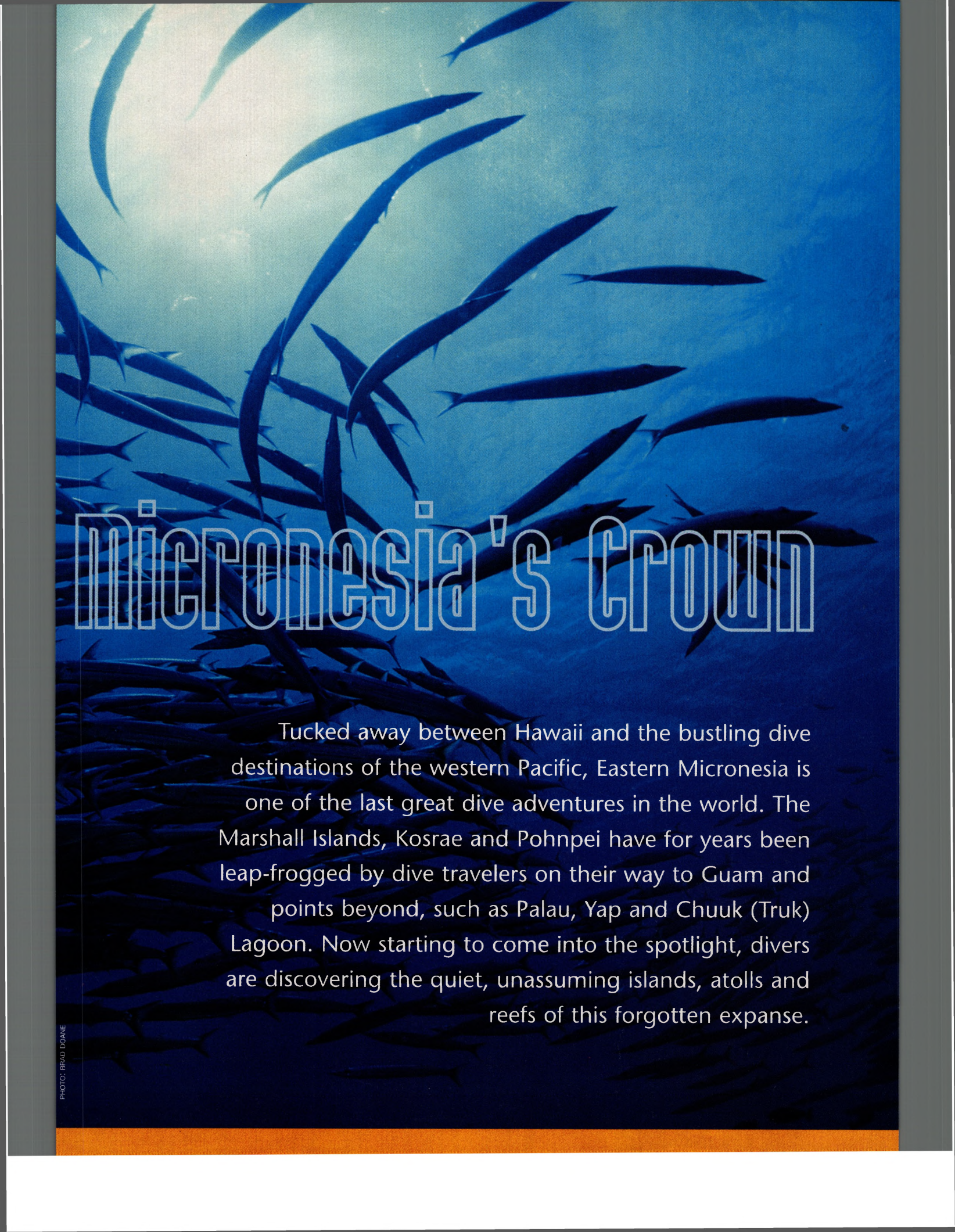
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A large school of barracuda swimming in deep blue water. The fish are silvery and elongated, moving in a coordinated pattern across the frame. The background is a gradient of blue, from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom.

by Brad Doane

The Jewels in Eastern

A barracuda-filled
sea off Kosrae.



Micronesia's Crown

Tucked away between Hawaii and the bustling dive destinations of the western Pacific, Eastern Micronesia is one of the last great dive adventures in the world. The Marshall Islands, Kosrae and Pohnpei have for years been leap-frogged by dive travelers on their way to Guam and points beyond, such as Palau, Yap and Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon. Now starting to come into the spotlight, divers are discovering the quiet, unassuming islands, atolls and reefs of this forgotten expanse.



Sharks thrive in the waters surrounding Bikini Atoll.

Marshall Islands

Despite having 1,225 islands (only 24 of which are populated) in 29 atolls and 870 reefs encompassing more than two million square kilometers of prime Pacific, the Marshall Islands remain one of the world's best kept diving secrets.

The first big hint of the Marshalls' potential came, oddly enough, from a non-natural source: The "atomic fleet" of WWII wrecks found beneath the waters of Bikini Atoll, which put the Marshall Islands on the diving map. Used as a guinea pig in early atomic weapons tests, the ghost fleet now lies on the sandy lagoon floor and is considered by many to be the premier wreck diving destination on the planet. Here you will find the world's only diveable aircraft carrier, the 880-foot-long USS *Saratoga*, as well as the battleships USS *Arkansas* and IJMS *Nagato* (Admiral Yamamoto's flagship during the attack on Pearl Harbor).

However, the wrecks of Bikini aren't the only treasures to be found in the Marshalls. Discovered long ago by serious anglers, the waters outside the lagoons are the territory of large predators—marlin, tuna,

Kosrae reefs feature mountainous stands of hard coral.

Skin Diver GUIDE Eastern Micronesia

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FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:

Marshall Islands: Year-round. Slightly drier and cooler January through March. Typhoons are rare, although March, April, October and November can be stormy. **Kosrae:** Year-round. Dry season between May and October; rainy season between November and April. **Pohnpei:** Year-round. January and February are the driest months, April and May are the wettest. **Topside**

Climate: Tropical oceanic, cooled year-round by the northeast trade winds. Average temperature is 80°F. **Water Temperature:** 80-82°F.

Exchange Rate: The U.S. dollar is used throughout Micronesia. **Time Difference:** Marshall Islands & Kosrae: EST plus 17 hours. Pohnpei: EST plus 16 hours.

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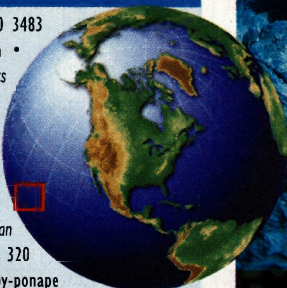
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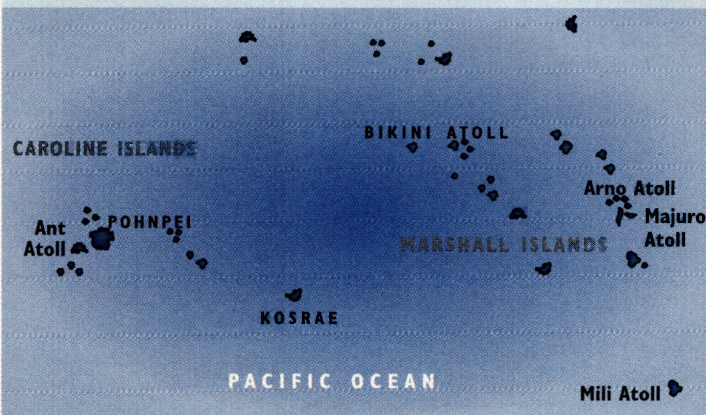
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Eastern Micronesia



The striking blue mantle of a *Tridacna*.

Wahoo, Mahi-Mahi and, of course, sharks. In fact, the Marshalls are considered by some of the most experienced divers in the world to have the "sharkest" waters anywhere. On Majuro Atoll, divers can wake up in a beautiful waterside resort and make the short boat ride to dive huge coral formations inside the protected lagoon or on the steep, coral-encrusted flanks outside of the lagoon. Encounters with swirling schools of jacks and barracuda are interspersed with sightings of the aforementioned predators. Those wishing to venture out even farther, can keep a lookout for whales, dolphins and feeding tuna on a one-hour boat ride to Arno Atoll. Still largely unexplored, Arno's sheer walls are home to a plethora of sharks and Three-banded Anemonefish, both easily seen in the 100-foot visibility. Finally, for a truly remote hide-out, divers may consider taking the short flight to Mili Atoll, where off-gassing time can be spent under a palm tree on their own private island.

Kosrae

Kosrae's idyllic charm is intoxicating. The island is home to a small population of gracious islanders who treat every visitor as an honored guest. Incredibly proud of their heritage and the island they love, they are committed to preserving its biological majesty. Unlike other dive destinations that waited until the irreversible signs of diver impact appeared, here the local government and dive operators installed a network of moorings around the island in anticipation of the divers who are just now starting to key in on this

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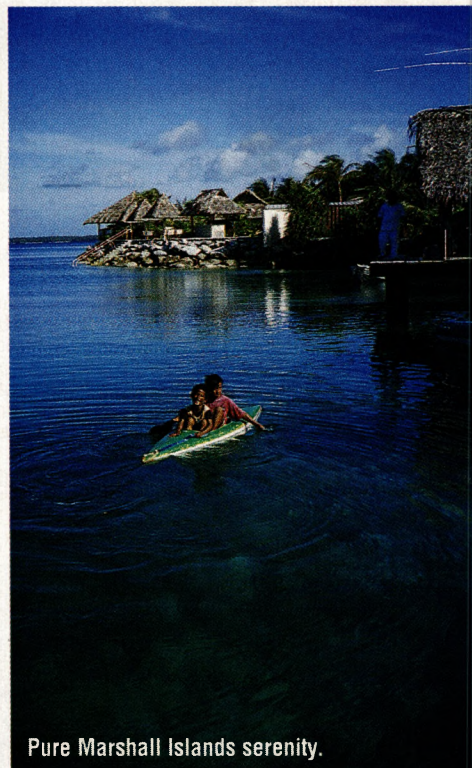
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Eastern Micronesia

relatively unknown gem.

The diving on Kosrae is as visually stunning as it is unavoidably relaxing. The gently sloping reefs are easy to navigate and offer hours of unhurried underwater bliss amongst thousands of fish and spectacular coral formations. Sharks, Napoleon Wrasse, Spotted Eagle Rays, turtles and schools of barracuda often join divers gliding along



Pure Marshall Islands serenity.

the fringing reefs. Night dives on Kosrae are particularly spectacular and produce sightings of all manner of nocturnal critters.

Kosrae's incredible biodiversity doesn't end at the waterline. Mangrove forests wrap around the island, and are home to seahorses, snapper, herons, egrets, iguanas and the sweet-tasting mangrove crab. A guided tour of the mangroves ecosystem (part of the Utwe-Walung Marine Park) with Tadao Wakuk, "The Last Storyteller," is an absolute must. A third-generation storyteller, Tadao's knowledge of the local flora and fauna is unsurpassed.

Pohnpei

Pohnpei is perhaps the area's crown jewel. The capital of the Federated

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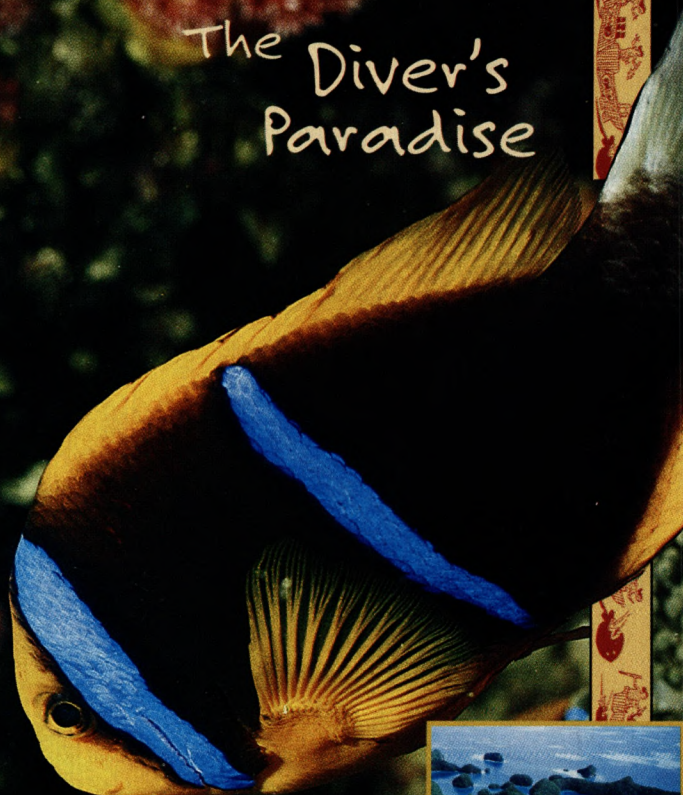
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Palau

The Diver's Paradise





Pohnpei's Kepirohi waterfall.

States of Micronesia, her rain forest-enshrouded peaks jut 2,500 feet into the Pacific sky, creating their own weather patterns and making Pohnpei one of the wettest places on earth. Tumbling down the verdant peaks, rivers erupt into magnificent waterfalls before eventually spilling into the sea—and that is where things get really exciting. Encircling the island is a lagoon, a barrier reef, 25 islets and eight outlying atolls. Dives in the passes that pierce the protective barrier reef are some the most exciting in the world.

At a site aptly named Manta Road, divers watch in awe as squadrons of Mantas soar by, mouths agape, while gorging themselves on the plankton-rich waters. Other passes yield schools, (yes, schools!) of sharks competing for food with tuna, jacks, barracuda, Mantas and other aquatic citizens. For those looking for truly “out-of-bounds” diving, a ride to Ant Atoll is well worth the journey. Electrifying dives in the lagoon’s passes and tranquil ones within the lagoon’s protected center are separated by picnic lunches and leisurely strolls along the uninhabited white sand beaches.

While on Pohnpei, don’t miss out on a visit to the legendary ruins of Nan Modol. A religious center built in the 12th century, Nan Modol has been designated as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. On the edge of the reef, it consists of 92 man-made islets built with massive basalt “logs,” each weighing thousands of pounds. You can also explore WWII Japanese guns at the top of Sokehs Mountain or continue on to the top of Sokehs Rock. Its 500-foot sheer basalt face is one of Micronesia’s most prominent features.

If you’re looking for expansive, all-inclusive dive resorts or large, fancy live-aboards (or any live-aboards for that matter) this part of the world is not for you. If, however, you are looking for mind-blowing diving, true island culture, and the soul-enriching solitude that can only be found beyond the commercial amenities of the world’s more frequented dive destinations, then Eastern Micronesia is definitely your place! 🐟

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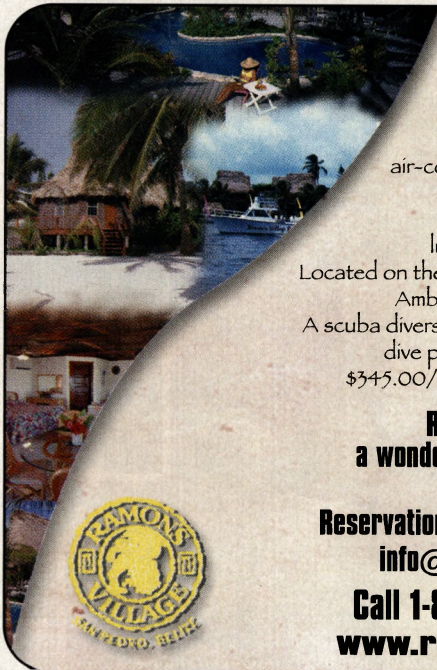
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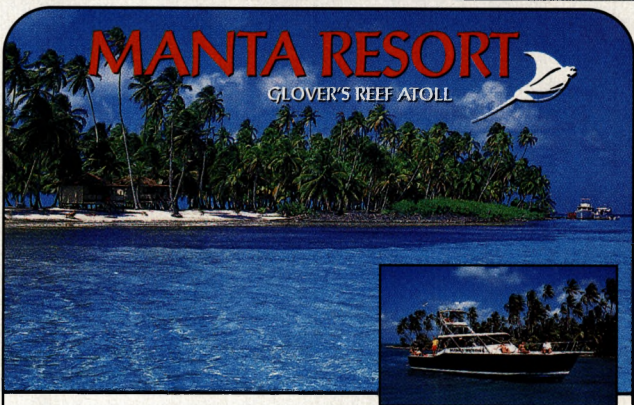
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birds, bats, turtles and rays

MEAT PIES, OR AS THE LOCALS CALL THEM, "patties," have been my favorite post-dive dietary supplement in the 20 years I have journeyed to the Cayman Islands. The best place to consume one (or three) of these spicy ground meat delicacies, wrapped

in a flaky corn meal crust and baked golden brown, has always been the Wholesome Bakery on Grand Cayman. Combined with their fabulously rich and thick chocolate shakes, nothing prepares you better for a noon-time nap followed by a late afternoon dive.

During my recent visit, I went for my fix. Parking in the small oceanfront lot facing Georgetown Harbour, then jumping out to cross the traffic, I literally stopped in my tracks. Gone! One of the island's most treasured landmarks—closed for construction.

Undaunted, I added "patties" to my things-to-find list of endemic flora and fauna for which this assignment to the Cayman Islands had brought me. More than just another dive trip, I was here with a group of avid adventurers on an eight-day nature extravaganza.

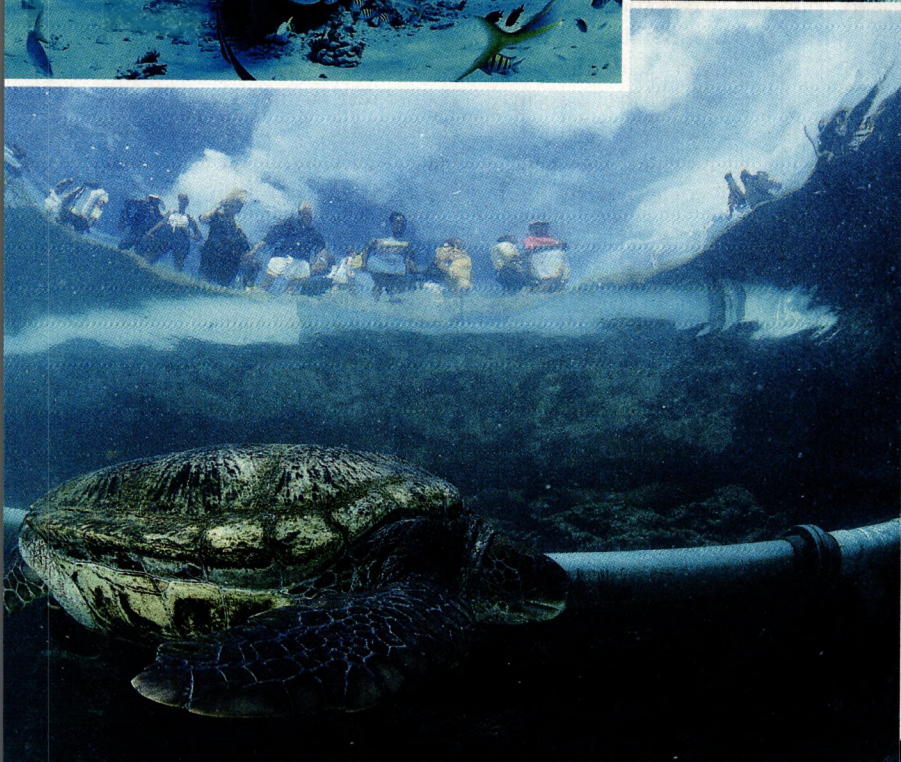
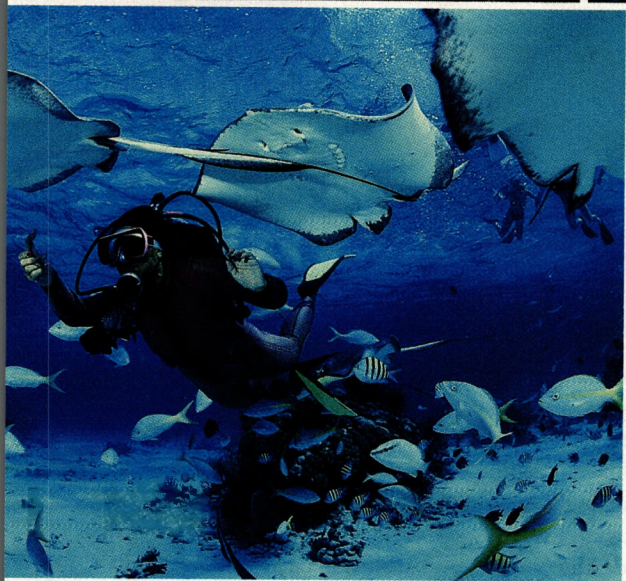
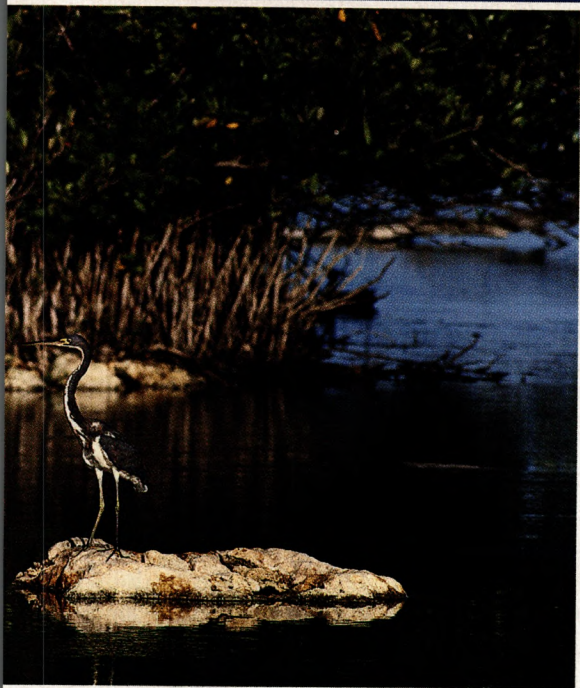
The Bird Sanctuary

Our first sighting was black-necked stilts and common moorhens, breakfasting in the mirrored water. A single snowy egret and a few least terns soon joined in the hunt. After an hour or so, we motored on to



A collage of everything that makes the Cayman Islands one of the world's greatest dive travel destinations—clockwise from left: blue iguana, heron, Orange Elephant Ear Sponge and Gray Angelfish, bat, Green Sea Turtle, Stingray City.

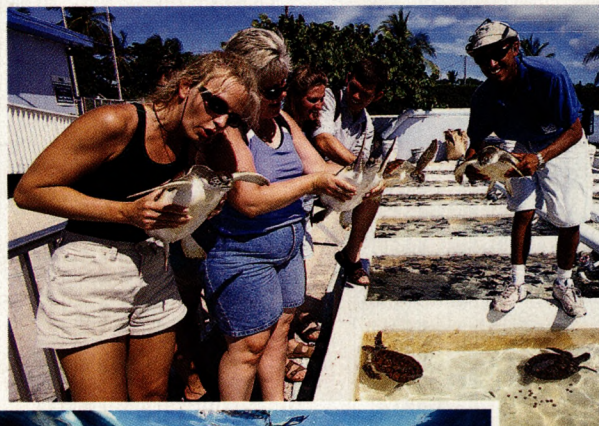




Meagre Bay Pond Sanctuary, a road-side-accessible saltwater lagoon. It did not take long to add a pied-billed grebe and four species of heron (little blue, tricolored, green and yellow-crowned night heron) to our birdwatching file. After a successful morning outing, my stomach began its afternoon yearnings.

"Is it time for a pattie yet?" I asked, hopefully.

Much to my delight, we swung by Island Taste, which supplies meat pies to all of the island's grocery stores and gas stations. Just pull in, fill up and get back on the road, said our guide, Geddes. "Any possibility of chocolate shakes?" I inquired. Instead, Geddes poured us a cup of syrupy, lemon sweet water. "Guaranteed to keep you going all day," he smiled.



chocolate shakes?" I inquired. Instead, Geddes poured us a cup of syrupy, lemon sweet water. "Guaranteed to keep you going all day," he smiled.

Rays the Roof

Our most anticipated dive on Grand Cayman began with a short Sunset Divers boat ride

ing a finger nipped is more likely from the marauding gangs of Yellowtail Snapper (and lately, an enterprising pufferfish) that compete for mollusk treats. After 60 minutes of dancing with the rays on the 10-foot sandy bottom, we returned to the boat—with all our digits.

Molting Pot

Our last stop of the day was at Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, 65 acres of floral displays created in 1990 by a joint effort of the Cayman Islands Government and the National Trust. My camera quickly latched onto a blue iguana. Endemic to Grand Cayman, *Cyclura nubile lewisi* is a unique and magnificent reptile. These large (up to three feet long) vegetarian lizards are named for their remarkable blue coloration, particularly notable on adult males.

Subspecies are found on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, but are not as blue. Luck shined on our visit as a large male lounged in open shade close to the habitat walls. And, he was shedding. A kiss of fill-flash illuminated the contrast between his virgin blue skin and his old rusted



Divers (and snorkelers) can select their own Green Sea Turtle, then hand-release it into the wild.



Top: The Cayman Turtle Farm releases nearly 4,000 turtles a year into their natural habitat. **Above:** A shallow coral garden packed with grunts, gorgonians and sea fans.

to North Sound and Stingray City. Even after 15 years of diving this site, interacting with a squadron of flat-body, evolutionized sharks sporting whip-like tails is still unbelievable.

No sooner had the boat engines stopped than a formation of sinewy Southern Stingrays buzzed the dive platform and circled on the sand beneath the boat. Char-gray on top and milky white on bottom, the rays flew over, under and between each diver entering the water. Although briefed by the divemaster on how to safely interact with the stingrays, there is no way to prepare first-time Stingray City visitors for the rush of touching the velvety skin of the rays, while hand-feeding them pieces of squid. Some in our group seemed timid at first, but they quickly found that the stingrays' menacing scowls simply mask their puppy-dog demeanor. Fear of hav-

armor.

Tranquility Base for Sea Turtles

We met Jose Bodden, a staff member of the Cayman Turtle Farm (CTF), for a tour. The CTF was started in 1968 by a marine biologist who convinced investors that farming Green Sea Turtles could provide the local market with edible produce, while at the same time replenish the sea with hatchling and yearling turtles. Today, the CTF raises some 3,000 Green Sea Turtles per year for local consumption, and releases nearly 4,000 into their natural habitat. "Our largest release is about 1,500 during Pirate's Week [in October]," says Jose.

In April of 2000, the CTF began an interactive turtle release program in conjunction with DiveTech, a scuba and freediving training facility situated next door. Divers (and snorkelers) can select their own Green Sea Turtle, and then hand-release it into the wild. Turtles and divers can go on a DiveTech boat or swim out directly from the shore and

into the wild. "We have assisted nearly 200 turtle releases," states Ian Thomas, a soft-spoken Englishman who also teaches advanced rebreather courses at DiveTech. "Afterward, may I suggest you drop down to our mini-wall (30 feet deep) and the best tarpon dive in Grand Cayman." I counted more than 20 of the stout "stainless steel" bonefish boldly schooling in and out of the cavern; I wondered why divemasters have not renamed Turtle Farm Reef the New Tarpon Alley.

The Brac Bats & Brac Reefs

Derived from a Gaelic term meaning bluff, "the Brac" is the tallest of the three islands. A tremendous 140-foot cliff rises vertically from the ocean floor on the island's north shore. Adventurers can view the limestone fortress from Long Beach at Spot Bay, savor spectacular cliff walks or sit in blissful solitude watching frigate birds (among the Brac's 200 species of birds) ride air currents rising up the sheer rock face.

Eons of rainwater have cut into the Brac's porous limestone, creating numerous caves and caverns. Legends suggest that pirate treasure may still be hidden in some, but traditionally these underground chambers have provided Brackers with shelter from hurricanes. We visited two: Half Way Ground Cave (also known as "Skull Cave") and Rebecca's Cave. The permanent residents of these rock labyrinths are among the most misunderstood and least appreciated of all animals—bats.

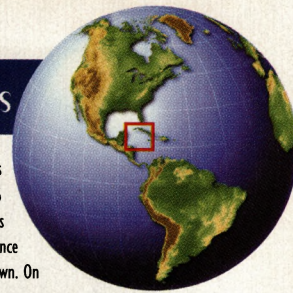
Eight different bat species inhabit the Cayman Islands; six of which are rare; four living only in the Caribbean. They are divided into three broad categories based on their diet: insects, fruit and pollen. None of the Cayman Islands' bats are blood suckers (vampires) and will not attack animals or humans.

Our next day was spent diving the Brac's classic fringing reefs. Punctuated by sand chutes, they are also loaded with sponges, gorgonians and incredible marine life, such as

Off Cayman Brac, an exploration of the M/V Captain Keith Tibbetts is a great way to end the day.

Skin Diver GUIDE • Cayman Islands

GETTING THERE: Cayman Airways offers direct flights from Miami and Houston. Island Air offers numerous daily flights from Grand Cayman to her sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Being that IA's birds are 16 passenger dual prop airplanes, baggage space (and weight) is limited. For divers, especially during the high season, this can create a problem. However, IA will work with travelers if you allow them to send some baggage a day in advance on a less crowded flight. The windows on IA's Twin-Otters are quite large compared to many older models I have flown. On a bright clear day the view is excellent for aerial photos of all three islands. Cayman Airways (800) 422-9626 www.caymanairways.com • Island Air (345) 949-5252 www.islandaircayman.com



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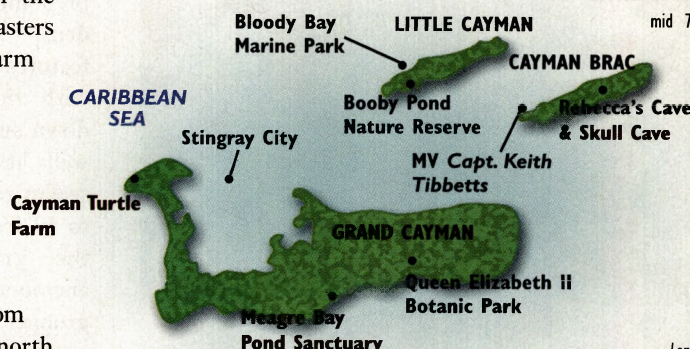
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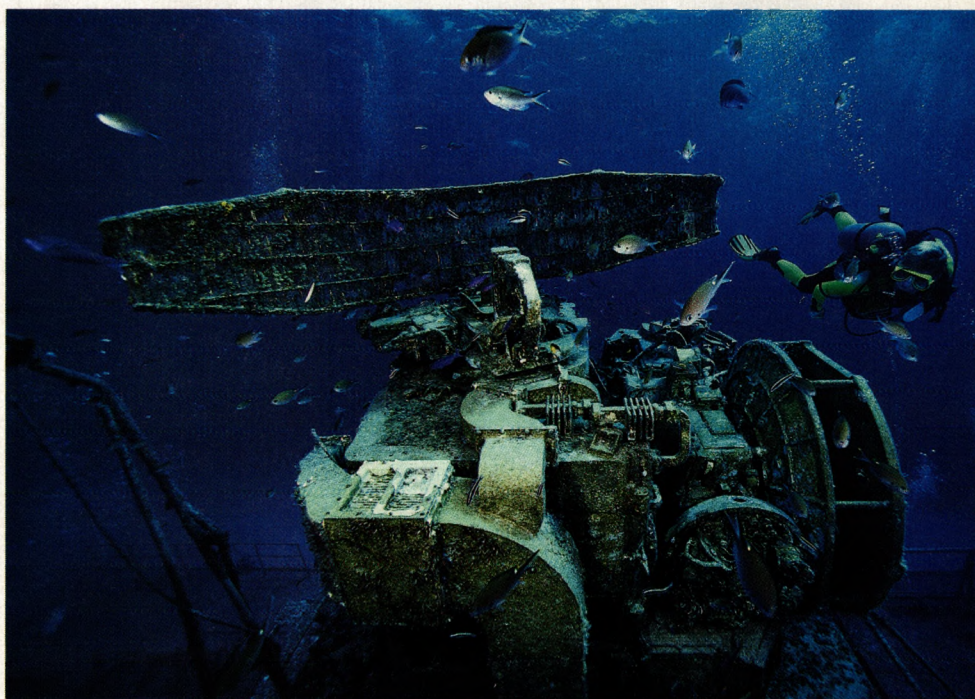
Spotted Eagle Rays and friendly Nassau Groupers. We also explored the now famous must-dive, the M/V *Captain Keith Tibbetts* Russian frigate. And by the afternoon, we were lounging in hammocks hung from Brac Reef's ocean cabana, watching the sky explode into the brilliant orange hues of sunset.

Little Cayman—Bloody Brilliant

The sky began turning gray as soon

as our Island Air flight landed on Little Cayman's grass runway. Upon checking into the Little Cayman Beach Resort, we hired a car to take us to look at boobies (the web-footed feathered variety) at Little Cayman's Booby Pond Nature Reserve—the most visitor-frequented place on Little Cayman.

But just as I opened my camera bag, giant raindrops exploded everywhere. No worries. We were on Little Cayman, home of Bloody Bay Wall. And in my



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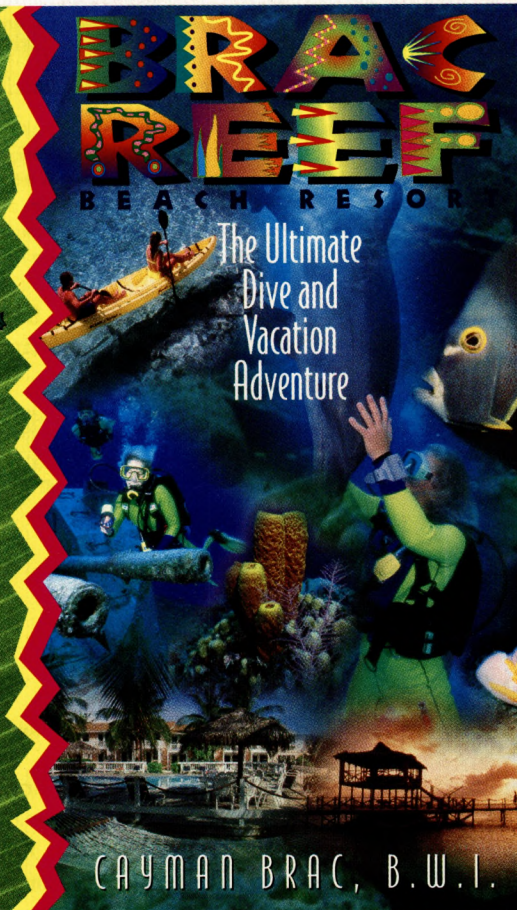
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...Bloody Bay
features near vertical
walls studded
with richly-colored
sponges.

to 20 feet. Before you know it, 60 minutes have expired and you may still have 500 to 1,000 psi.

My trip shaped up nicely, giving me the opportunity to see a whole new dimension of Cayman wildlife. Before I left, I shared a cold brew with friends and reminisced about my 15 years of diving the islands' magical sites. In all those trips, this was the first time I felt I had really visited the Cayman Islands. Of course, I ended this trip the same way I had ended all the others, with a visit to the Hungry Horse Restaurant in Grand Cayman's Owen Roberts International Airport. It's the last place to get a hot pattie before boarding your flight back to the States. 🐟

A special thanks to Geddes Hislop of Silver Thatch Excursions; T.J. Sevik, Wallace Platts, Gladys Howard and Coco-Avis of Cayman Islands National Trust; Cayman Turtle Farm, Ltd.; Sunset House; DiveTech; Brac Reef Beach Resort; and Little Cayman Beach Resort.

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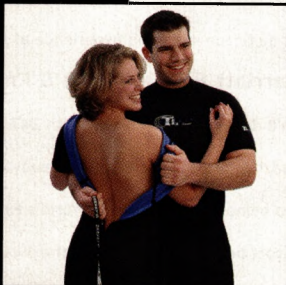
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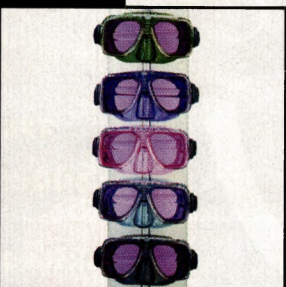
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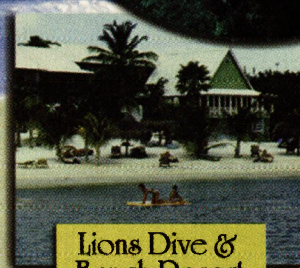
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According to Bob Dunning, Mote's



Deputy Director of special projects, proceeds from the tag are slated for efforts that contribute most meaningfully to improving reef health through education, research and conservation programs.

—BRET FORBES

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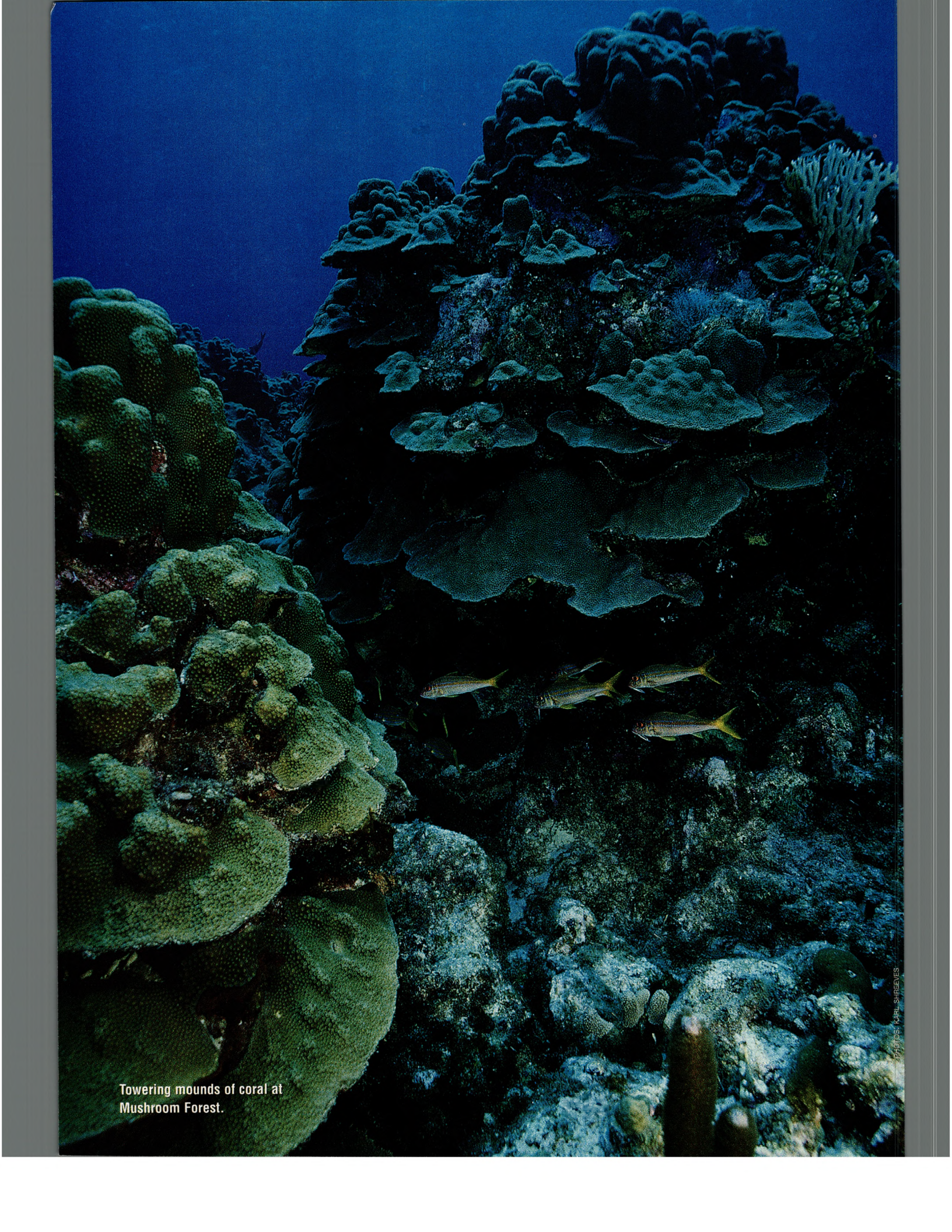
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Towering mounds of coral at
Mushroom Forest.

Curaçao in the Blood

My first trip to Curaçao began in 1903. That year, Jan Willem Jacob Vander Linde Schotborgh, my great grandfather, took over Savonet, the largest plantation on Curaçao. He died in 1951, and Savonet evolved into today's 4,500-acre Christoffel National Park, with Mt. Christoffel, the tallest mountain on the island, in its borders.

Born on Curaçao, my mother spent childhood vacations and holidays at her grandparents' Savonet *landhuis* (land house or plantation house), until her father moved the family to Philadelphia in 1945. I grew up hearing stories and watching home movies about Savonet. Pictures and paintings of Curaçao surrounded me. All my life, Curaçao has called me. Curaçao's in my blood.

PAST & PRESENT

Growing up, I'd heard about Willemstad and its renowned European Dutch-style buildings along the waterfront. It was everything I'd expected and then some. Among Willemstad's noted features is the Queen Emma Bridge, which my mother and her sisters walked across almost daily. A swinging pontoon bridge dating back to 1888 and reconstructed in 1939, it's still in operation (for foot traffic only now). The bridge pivots entirely out of the way as ships pass to and from Santa Anna Bay, one of the world's busiest harbors. Today, cars cross the span on the Queen Juliana Bridge, which rises 185 feet

above the water and affords a spectacular view of Willemstad's downtown area.

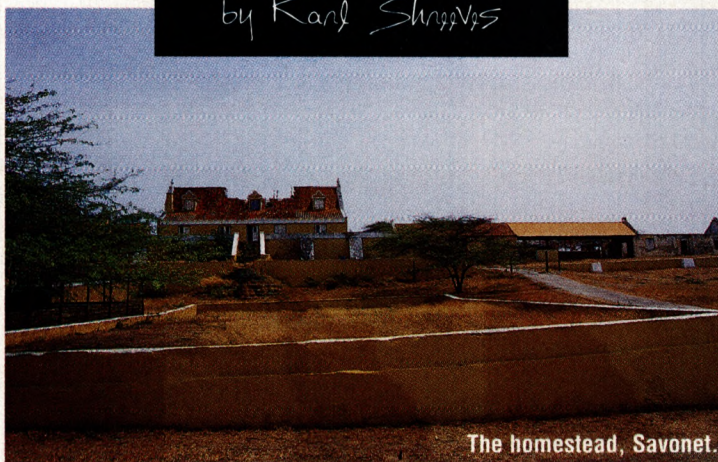
Getting away from town, there's still much to see. I visited the ruins of Fort Beekenburg (1703), with a spectacular view of the Spaanse Water (Spanish Water) Harbor and the east end of the island from its intact battle tower. Heading up, a nine-year-old girl dashed up the ladder ahead of me, asking me something in Dutch over her shoulder. With sudden insight, through her I saw my aunts and mother growing up in Curaçao, and wished that I, too, had grown up in such a place.

Naturally, I ventured out of Willemstad and visited Savonet. Besides

my interest due to family reasons, Savonet sits at the entrance to Christoffel National Park and at the base of Mt. Christoffel, Curaçao's tallest mountain. I tried to picture my great grandmother cooking in the kitchen and my mother playing with her sisters on the stairs, just like I'd seen in photographs. But Savonet is falling down now, and it all seems to have been another place in another time.

Mt. Christoffel, however, seems to have weathered the years quite well, and is an amazing site. You can climb it (it's not a difficult climb), but if you've been diving, keep in mind that the peak is at 1,239 feet, which technically makes altitude a consideration.

by Karl Shingvis



The homestead, Savonet.

A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

After four days in Willemstad, I headed out to Habitat Curaçao. There, I discovered a delight for the hard core diver and those who want to get away from everything.

Want to dive? Take the morning or afternoon boat, or just grab a tank and jump in. Then hose down on the dock, stick

GETTING THERE: ALM and American Airlines provide service to Curaçao. U.S. and Canadian citizens need proof of citizenship and a round-trip airline ticket.

FACTS & TIPS: **Best Time To Visit:** Year-round. **Topside Climate:** In the mid 80s°F most of the year. Curaçao doesn't get much rain, and what it does get is primarily between October and February. Dress: Light, casual and tropical. If you go in for fine dining, ladies will want dresses and men will want jackets. Some casinos require jackets. Bathing suits are for the beach only. If visiting Christoffel Park or hiking anywhere inland, cactus and hot rock demand sturdy shoes and long pants. **Water Temperature:** Low to mid 80s°F year-round. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 1.77 (Netherlands Antillean Guilder). USD easily accepted in resort areas. Major casinos primarily use USD. Major credit cards accepted almost everywhere. Save \$20 U.S. for departure tax back to the U.S. or to Aruba. Departure tax is \$10 between Curaçao and the other Netherlands Antilles. **Time Difference:** Same as Eastern Standard Time. Curaçao does not observe daylight-saving.



DIVE OPERATORS & RESORTS:

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RESOURCES: Curaçao Board of Tourism (800) 445-8266 www.curacao-tourism.com • Lonely Planet Guide to Curaçao www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com

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your gear in your locker, and take in a bite at the restaurant. Relax a bit by the pool, or go diving again.

In the hands of Dive Operations Manager Lex Kleine and his staff, I visited several of Curaçao's top sights, beginning with the well-known Mushroom Forest. Mushroom Forest gets its name from a large patch of star coral heads shaped like, well, mushrooms. The site differs from the typical Curaçao dive in that it has a gradual slope.

Not far from Mushroom Forest lies Sponge Forest. I won't insult your intelligence by telling you how it got its name; but the sponges here are huge, ranging up to six feet high and four feet across.

We also dived an area of reef called Sint Marie. Here you can find the Witch's Kitchen, characterized by several large barrel sponges grouped together like a sorcerer's cauldrons. At Sint Marie we didn't go below 70 feet, but like most Curaçao sites, there's good coral and lots to see between about 30 feet and, well, deeper than you want to go.

Vaersenaai (Vaersenaai Bay) offers well-developed reefs, including Car Wrecks, an artificial reef developed by Chevy, Ford and several other auto manufacturers. A good dive to follow Car Wrecks is Slangenbaai, or Snake Bay, ironically named by local fisher-

men, apparently due to the complete *absence* of snakes. Snake Bay has a notable sand shelf at about 20 to 25 feet with little growth (possibly explaining why snakes avoid the place), and then an abrupt slope/wall into oblivion. It features excellent soft corals and sponge patches in the 40- to 60-foot range.

More westward, popular dive sites include Hell's Corner, which is a steep shelf with pillar coral, and Black Coral Gardens, which has large brownish corals you'll see when you go over the drop off. Go all the way west to get to Wata Mula, which is the most north-westernly frequented dive site. Because it's not as protected as other sites, you'll often see different corals and fish. Rough water and current make this a site for experienced divers. Safely around the



Diving in Willemstad

Staying at Willemstad's Princess Beach Hotel, I began my dives with Hans and Sandy Ullrich, managing partners/owners of Ocean Encounters, with locations at Lions Dive Hotel as well as at Princess. Both locations offer boat diving, shore diving and are full-service dive centers that supply instruction, enriched air nitrox, gear—whatever you need for a dive trip centered in Willemstad.

I also dived with Seascope Dive Shop at the Sheraton Curacao. Besides offering all the services of a full-line dive center and operating two dive boats, Seascope is the largest full-range watersports facility on the island.

Popular Curacao dive sites visited out of Willemstad include the coastal islet of Klein Curacao, *Tug Boat* (a small, photogenic wreck in only 15 feet of water), *Oostpunt* (east point), *Superior Producer* and *Waterplane*, which is the cleverly named wreck of, you guessed it, a waterplane.

corner, Playa Kalki (a.k.a. Alice in Wonderland) and Playa Lagon are popular boat dive sites; Playa Lagon is also a favorite spot among shore divers.

I found several things in Curacao—great diving, shopping, rock climbing, off-roading, horseback riding, casinos and almost every popular watersport. I

found that Curacao offers a glimpse of history, and I found places for both those who want the pace of a city, or to escape from everything. And, amid all this, I found my past. 🐟

Special thanks to ALM Airlines, Hans and Sandy Ullrich at Ocean Encounters, Evan and Ben Van Dalen of Seascope Dive Shop, and Lex Kleine of Habitat Curacao.



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FREEFLOW Top to Bottom

WHO SAID DIVING VACATIONS had to be all diving? Even those of us who were "born wet" need to check out the topside scenery. So, Anse Chastanet, a St. Lucia scuba hideaway, recently added seven miles of private mountain biking trails through thick tropical forests. There's also a biking facility with no less than 50 Cannondale F800 suspension bikes. The resort is busy planning scuba/biking safaris for the near future, but in the meantime you can kick off your fins and explore sans a guide. Don't worry, you won't get lost—it's an island. 🐟

Scuba/biking packages can be booked through accredited scuba tour companies, or call Anse Chastanet's dive reservation hotline (888) GO LUCIA.

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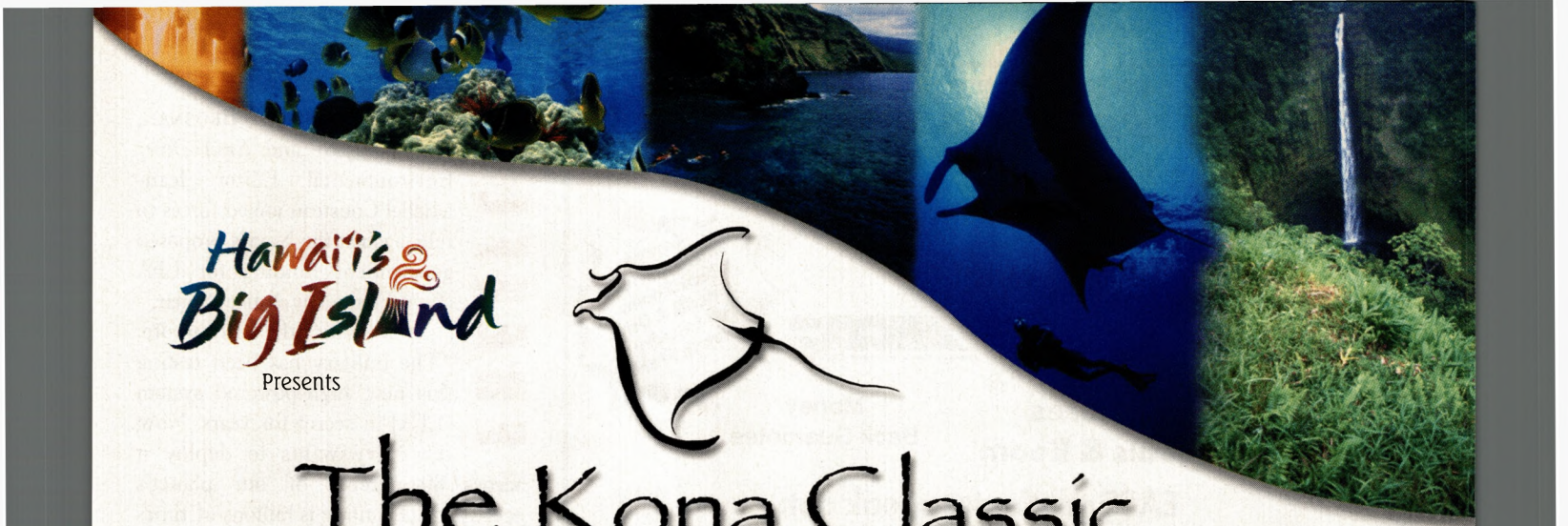
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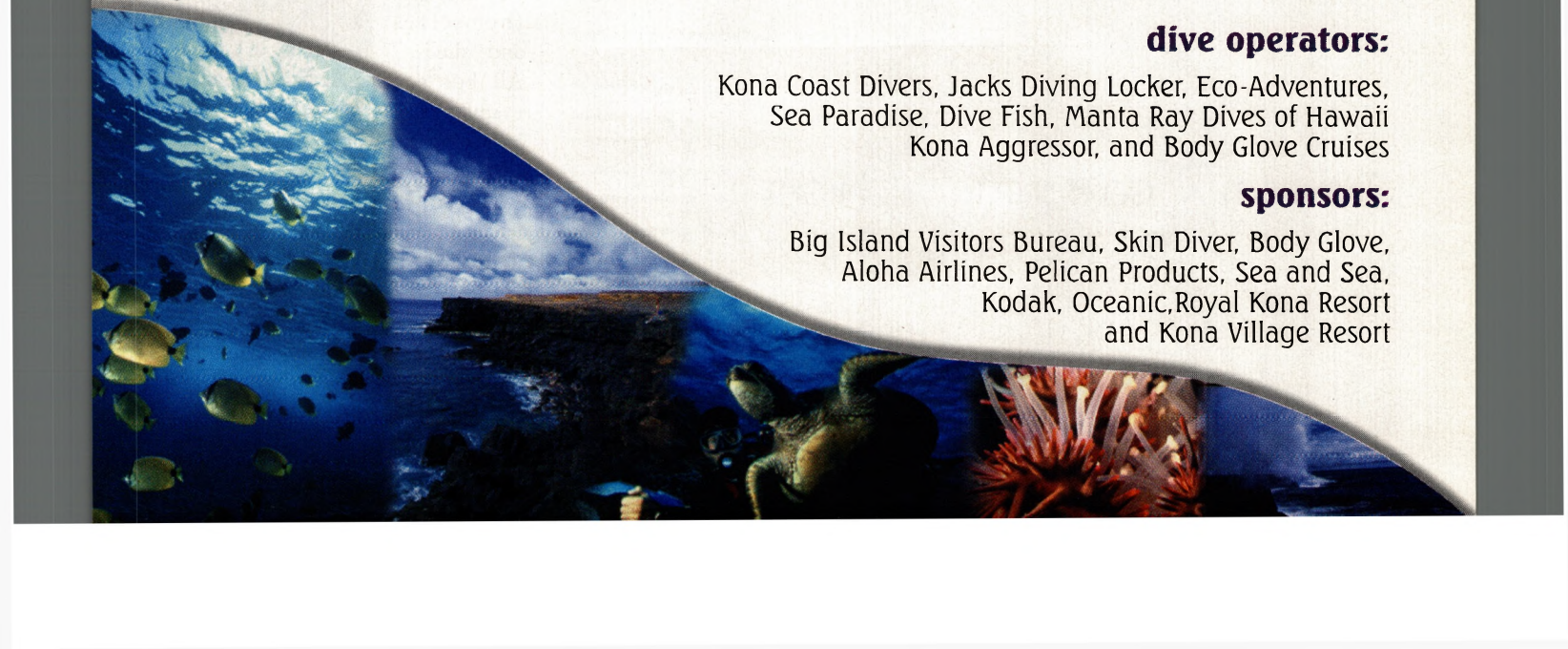
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FREEFLOW A Call to Arms

RECENTLY, PIERCE BROSNAN, James Taylor and *Skin Diver* Environmental Editor Jean-Michel Cousteau joined forces to rally against the Navy's proposed government funding for LFA (Low-Frequency Active) Sonar.

In a letter, the trio wrote: "The military has been testing this new, high-powered system [LFA] in secret for years. Now, the Navy wants to deploy it across 80 percent of our planet's oceans... LFA noise is billions of times

more intense than that [already] known to disturb whale migration



tion and communication. Whales and dolphins depend on their sensitive hearing for survival. To put it simply, a deaf whale is a dead whale... Imagine an acoustic wave so powerful that, even at substantial distances, it can destroy your hearing, cause your lungs or ears to hemorrhage, or even kill you."

The predicted damage of the LFA has been proven in a recent military exercise, testing technology similar to LFA in the northern Bahamas. Apparently, "four different species of whales stranded themselves and died.... All but one examined by researchers had suffered hemorrhaging around the inner ear—the telltale sign of acoustic trauma."



If you would like to help, go to www.nrdcaction.org/index.asp?step=2&item=518. The Natural Resources Defense Council and Ocean Futures Society have set up this web page to simplify sending electronic messages of protest to U.S. senators and representatives. Congress is now deciding the Navy's funding for the next year. 🐋

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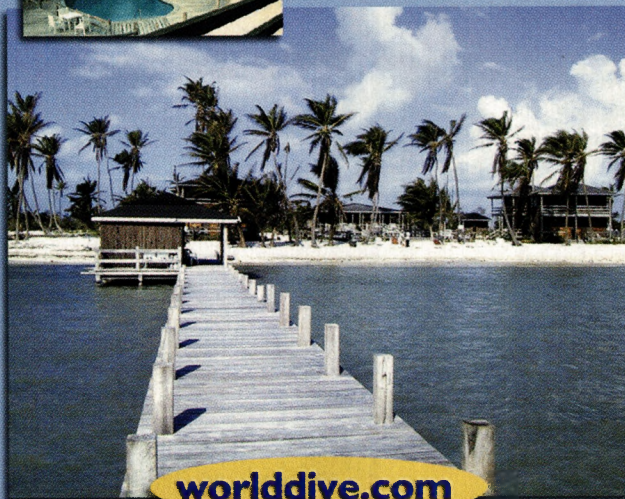


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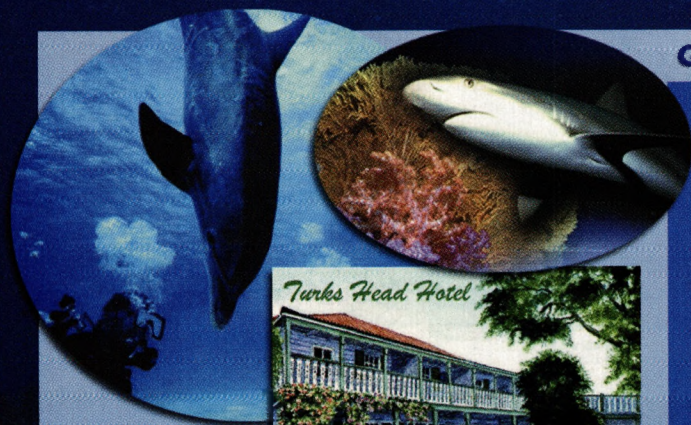
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The Comet Costume

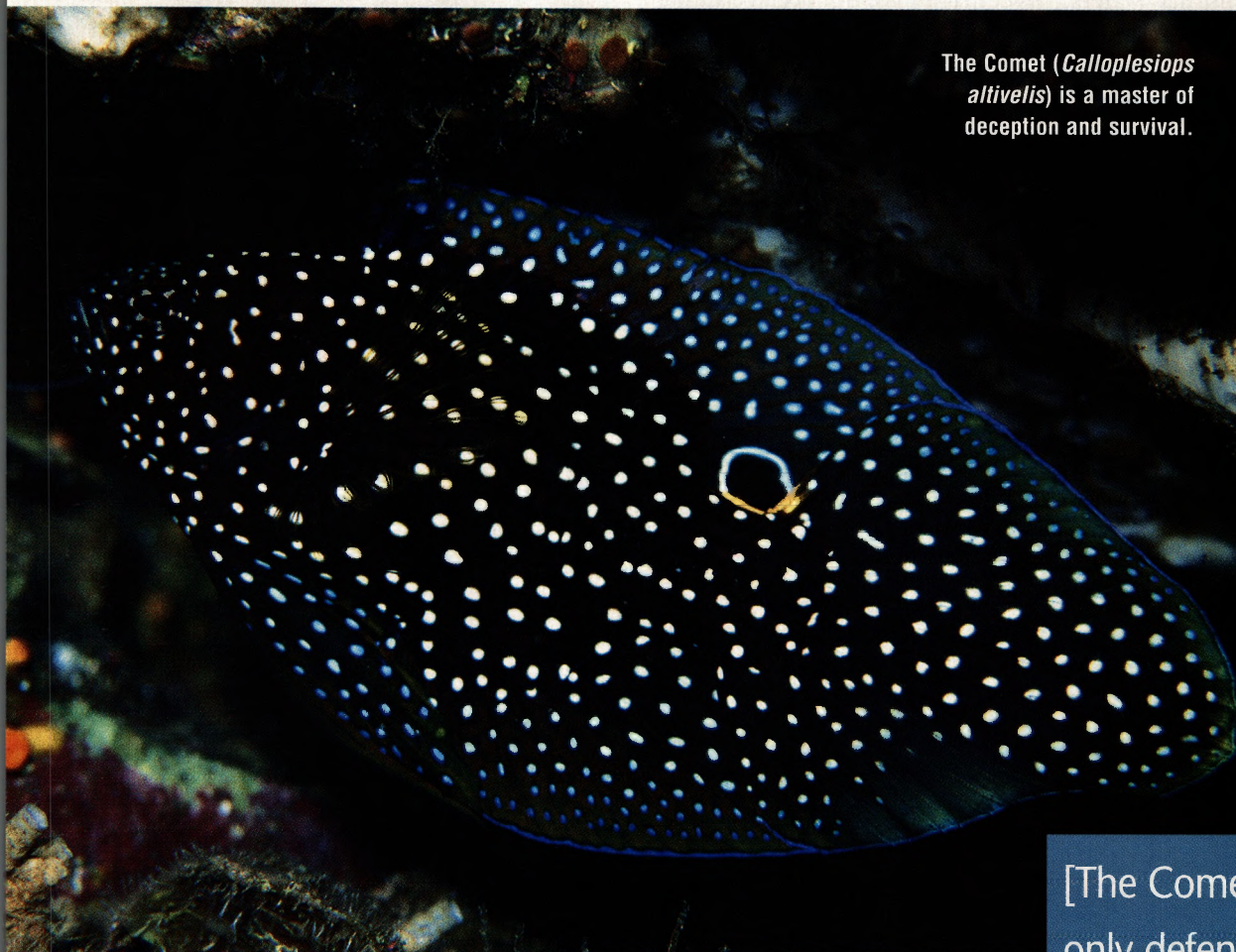
BY DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT AND LARRY TACKETT

EVER WONDER ABOUT ALL THOSE STRIPES, CIRCLES and funky designs you see on tropical fish? And what they're all for? The elusive Comet is a perfect example of functional fish fashion. The entire fish, including the fins, is covered with iridescent blue and bright white polka dots, except for one big dark spot, or ocellus, encircled by a blue ring with a flash of yellow. The Comet's round shape and unending glimmer of dots

ing it hard for the hunter to tell if its prey is coming or going. As a result, the Comet gets a critical split second to escape unharmed or with only a bit of tail damage.

The second purpose involves a bit of mimicry. When the Comet senses danger, it ducks headfirst into a nearby crevice, leaving its backside exposed. Then it manipulates its fins so that, when combined with the false eyespot, creates the illusion of a Spotted Moray

The Comet (*Callopleksiops altivelis*) is a master of deception and survival.



makes it hard to tell the head from the tail end, and that's exactly what nature intended.

What makes the Comet so special is not just its pattern, but its extra large fins that give it a smoothness of movement. Its only defense from predators lies in the all-over patterning. The ocellus, or false eyespot, is near the tail and serves two purposes. First, it draws a predator's attention to the false eye instead of the less conspicuous real eye, mak-

ing it hard for the hunter to tell if its prey is coming or going. As a result, the Comet gets a critical split second to escape unharmed or with only a bit of tail damage.

During the day, Comets stay back along the wall, venturing out only in darkness to feed on small fish and crustaceans. If the Comet doesn't immediately hide, check the reef wall or roof for an eggmass. The male tends the eggs until they hatch after a few days.

I saw my first one for only a second or two in the Maldives years ago. There have been subsequent sightings in Indonesia, and I'm still as thrilled when I find one now as I was then. 🐟

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Look for Comets hovering near reef crevices or under overhangs in the Indo-Pacific.

[The Comet's] only defense lies in the all-over patterning.

ENCOUNTERS

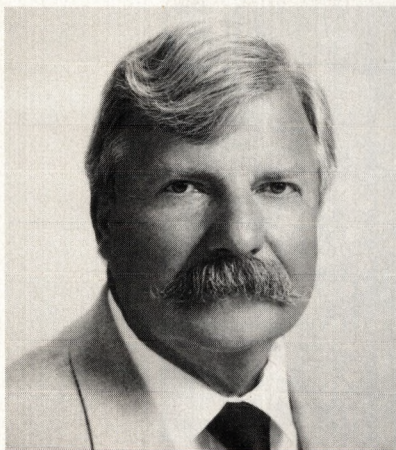
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milestones by scott d. jones

Bev Morgan—Beyond “Baywatch”

AS A LIFEGUARD FOR LOS ANGELES County in the 1950s, Bev Morgan was a part of “Baywatch” decades before it became fashionable to wear red swim trunks and patrol the Southern California waters. As a lifeguard, he helped to start the diver training and safety program offered by L.A. County back in 1954.

Bev also helped create the popular Dive N’ Surf shop in Redondo Beach, CA. Through the store, he provided underwater technical support and equipment for numerous Hollywood productions, including “Sea Hunt.”



After selling Dive N’ Surf and undertaking a successful career as an underwater photographer and feature writer for *Skin Diver* and *SURFER* magazines, Bev began creating technical diving equipment. This eventually led to the formation of Diving Systems International, his current company in Santa Barbara, CA. Bev, and his former partner Bob Kirby, have designed more than 30 different diving helmets for commercial, technical and recreational diving. One of Bev’s most intriguing designs was the full-face mask helmet he designed for the cast of the film, *Sphere*. The helmets, worn by Sharon Stone and Dustin Hoffman, allowed producers and the audience to see the actors faces during filming. This was a huge step in underwater filmmaking.

Bev was inducted in the DEMA Hall of Fame in 1996, and has twice been awarded the NOGI Award from the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences. 🐟

Dave Parker—Filling the Need

DAVE PARKER HAS BEEN AN AVID DIVER FOR more than 40 years. A practical man who looks for ways to improve and enhance the diving experience, Dave is also an innovator. During many of his dives, Dave would say to himself, “If I need this, it’s likely that someone else will, also.” And with that spirit, Pelican Products was born.



Based in Southern California under Dave’s direction, Pelican has been responsible for a number of diving innovations, including diving floats, which he initially built out of his garage and sold via mail order. Soon it became obvious that the demand for the product was growing to a point where expansion was necessary. Together with his friend and partner Jerry Linehan, Pelican has grown into a multi-product company operating around the world.

From the first float, the company’s product line has expanded to include a complete line of waterproof flashlights, equipment cases and other accessories. It’s likely that many of the products were born from Dave’s own diving experiences as he continues to be an active part of the Pelican operation. 🐟

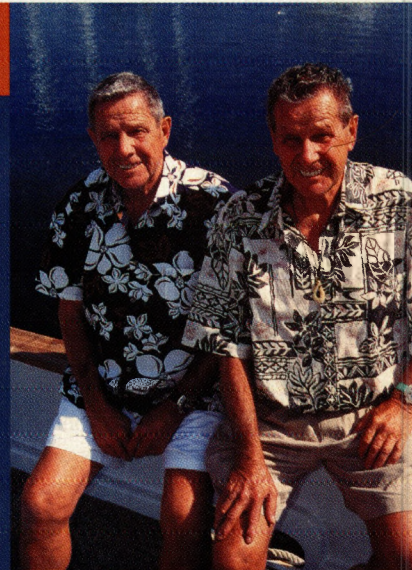
PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT): SKIN DIVER ARCHIVES; SKIN DIVER ARCHIVES; COURTESY BODY GLOVE

Bob and Bill Meistrell—It Took a Refrigerator to Fit Like a Body Glove

FROM THE TIME BOB AND BILL MEISTRELL BUILT THEIR OWN “DEEP SEA DIVING” helmet in their backyard at age 14, these identical twins have loved the ocean. And the young adventurers tried a number of ways to keep themselves warm in the chilly Southern California waters. It was likely by accident that they discovered a crude insulation material on the back of a refrigerator called neoprene.

Bob and Bill bought the famous Dive N’ Surf operation from their friend Bev Morgan in the 1950s. Sales of their “wetsuits” steadily increased, then known by the brand name “Thermocline,” and attracted a lot of consumer attention. But the Meistrells thought they could come up with a better name for the wetsuit. Someone said, “It fits like a glove.” From there, Body Glove was born and the rest is marketing history.

Today, Body Glove is one of the most recognizable and profitable companies in the world. Bob and Bill oversaw the growth of Dive N’ Surf and Body Glove before turning the operation over to their children, and have become well-known icons in the recreational industry. Inducted into the Diving Hall of Fame and the Pioneers of Surfing Group, they show no signs of slowing down and continue to dive AND surf whenever they can find the time. 🐟





from most major drysuit manufacturers) that you receive some training in drysuit usage before venturing out on your own.

And let's throw in the *caveat* here: This article is intended to give you an idea of what you'll do in this training, but is NOT meant to supplant the training itself. Some stores will include the drysuit training with the purchase price of the suit. Others will charge you extra for it. In either case, it's valuable to have the training, because there are problems that are unique to drysuits.

One of the biggest problems, and the one that has the most potential to cause a serious accident, is the possibility

Wet on the outside; dry, warm and happy on the inside.

of an uncontrolled inverted (feet first) ascent. This can happen when your feet get higher than your head, and you start ascending without realizing it. Before you know it, you're being pulled toward the surface by your heels. Not

a good thing.

So, probably the most important technique you'll learn in drysuit training is how to get yourself upright in order to vent the air from the suit. Since most drysuits have only one

How to Dive Dry BY KEN KURTIS

I QUITE CLEARLY REMEMBER THE first time I put on a drysuit and waded into the ocean. Aside from feeling that the seals (which couldn't be trimmed because it was a loaner suit from a manufacturer) were cutting off the blood-flow to my hands and giving my carotid artery a good workout, I remember feeling like I was inside a giant baggie

as the water pressure collapsed the suit around my body.

It wasn't actually that difficult, but

It wasn't actually that difficult, but it was different. And that's why it's a good idea (and actually a requirement from most of the major drysuit manufacturers) that you receive some training in drysuit usage before venturing out on your own.

it was different. And that's why it's a good idea (and actually a requirement

exhaust valve, usually located around the shoulder or upper forearm (Apollo

suits have an additional exhaust valve on each of the ankles, which is designed to help prevent inverted ascents), learning to right yourself is a key skill.

In fact, just developing a different sense of awareness while wearing a drysuit is important. You'll need to develop an awareness of where you are relative to the bottom or reef, and where your dump valve/vent is in relation to your body position. You'll also need to develop a habit of rolling your body so the exhaust valve is the highest point on the suit, which will allow you to dump air.

Another factor involves keeping air inside the drysuit. You need some to offset suit squeeze and for insulation. But you'll also need to decide and learn how much you'll use your drysuit as a BC instead of your normal BC (which still should be worn). Some of the drysuit manufacturers recommend using the drysuit as both insulation and BC, and only use your standard BC for surface floatation.

Others recommend you keep out enough air in your drysuit to offset squeeze and add insulation, but still use your regular BC to control buoyancy changes during the dive. The thought is that since you can generally dump air more quickly from a BC than a drysuit, it's an added safety measure during an emergency. And since you keep less air inside the drysuit, an inverted ascent is less likely to occur in the first place.

...once you get yourself up to speed, I think you'll find drysuit diving to be an amazingly refreshing way to dive in waters that previously had left you cold at the end of the day.

Another important skill you'll learn is the proper care of the suit, especially the zippers and seals. Drysuits can be finicky creatures and a snagged or torn zipper can result in a repair that can easily cost hundreds of dollars. So it behooves you to pay close attention to the little details.

You'll also learn to deal with your



SHELL vs. NEOPRENE

Which way to go? It's an age-old dilemma. Shell suits are quicker-drying and lighter weight, but you will need to wear an added thermal layer to stay warm. Neoprene suits are heavier and stay wetter, but are warmer, and more flexible. You'll find proponents for each—try renting one of each to see which type you are more comfortable wearing.

seals. Since the goal is to keep all water out of the suit, the seals need to be tight enough to be waterproof, but not so tight that they're uncomfortable. And, unfortunately, if you trim the seal too much (make it too loose), you'll flood the suit and also have to replace the seal (a semi-expensive repair).

Speaking of floods—that's another area you'll learn to deal with. Drysuit flooding can be either full or partial

(I know it sounds weird, but it's not as easy to tell if you're flooded as you'd think) and knowing how to deal with it—continue the dive or abort—can make a big difference in whether the flood is merely an inconvenience or more problematic.

(Sidenote: For those who—like me—simply wear a T-shirt and shorts under their suit, bring a full change of clothes, including socks and underwear, so that if you do have a flood, you've got dry clothes to wear for the rest of the day.)

You'll also learn how to eliminate trapped air from the suit (so you're not adding too much weight), how to adjust your weights for the added buoyancy on the drysuit, how to deal with the somewhat-restricted movement you may have compared to a wetsuit, and how to care for your suit post-dive.

For those of us who dive in cold or semi-cold waters (or who are just warm-water wussies), a drysuit spells the difference between tolerating a day of diving and enjoying that same day to its fullest. But it's important to remember that, as with any new piece of equipment, some training is required, and a learning curve needs to be factored in. But once you get yourself up to speed, I think you'll find drysuit diving to be an amazingly refreshing way to dive in waters that previously had left you cold at the end of the day. 🐟



A drysuit instructor and his students discuss the success of their first drysuit dives.



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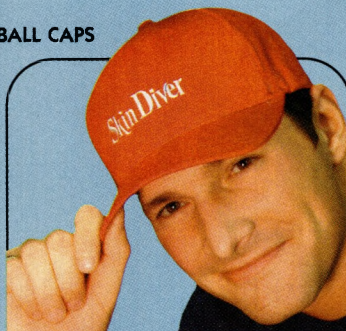
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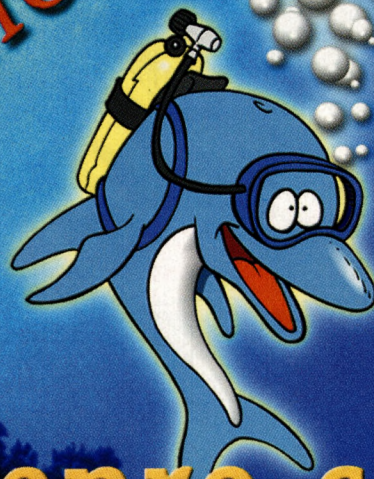
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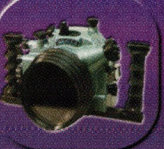
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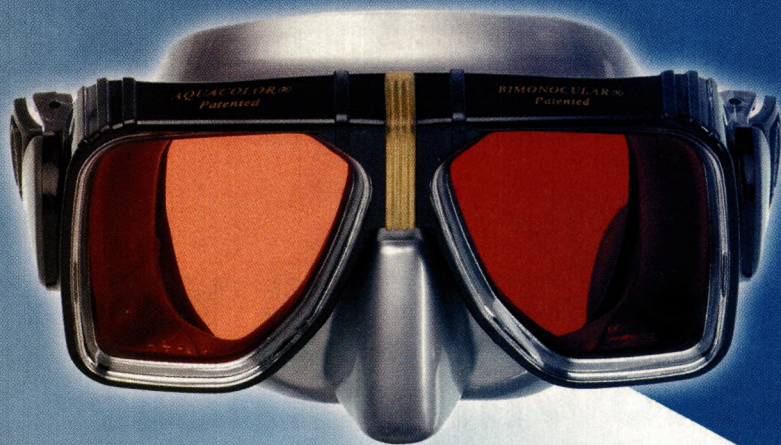
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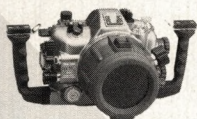
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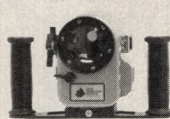
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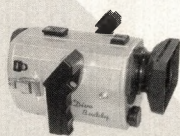
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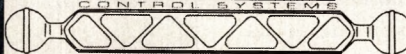
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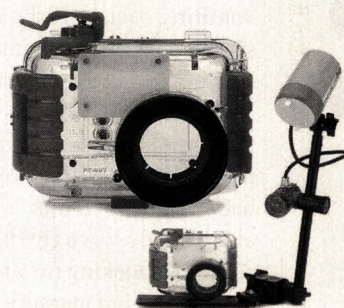
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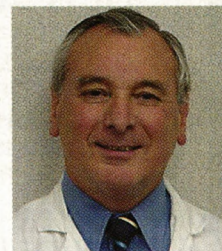
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SEASICKNESS ON A DIVE TRIP IS CERTAINLY NOT IN ANYONE'S plans, yet there are few divers who can avoid it when seas get rough. Prevention is the key to comfortable diving.

Motion sickness happens on boats, in cars and airplanes, in space flight and on amusement rides. Constant exposure seems to reduce susceptibility. The cause is repeated multidirectional accelerations that stimulate the brain to produce a sensation of nausea followed by vomiting. Research suggests that the combination of confused balance signals, motion of the stomach and muscles, and visual perception of motion all contribute to motion sickness. The illness usually begins with yawning and swallowing, excess salivation, cold sweats and fatigue, then vomiting occurs. If the symptoms persist for a day or more, intravenous fluids may be needed to prevent dehydration.

Certain behavior can reduce the risk for motion sickness. Many people minimize motion sickness by lying on their back or propped up a bit with their vision fixed above the horizon. Avoid reading or looking through telescopes or binoculars that magnify motion. Fixing

ed to the same motion exposure as a group given the actual medication. Selection of the two groups is done randomly. Blinding means that neither the physician nor the patient knows if they are taking the medication or a placebo. Based on randomized clinical trials, the most effective medication for motion sickness is Scopolamine. For divers, one Scopolamine patch placed on



Motion Sickness

your vision on stationary objects rather than moving objects and slow deep breathing also help. Avoiding alcohol, and minimizing food intake while in motion will also reduce your risk for getting motion sickness. Divers can avoid seasickness by quickly diving below the surface. This is a good strategy if you are in the early stages of seasickness, but entering the water while vomiting is risky. Most divers

Based on randomized clinical trials, the most effective medication for motion sickness is Scopolamine.

are not be prepared to deal with vomiting underwater and risk drowning or air embolism.

Medications

Like most other common disorders, motion sickness has been the subject of many tests of treatment. Treatment choice should be based on the quality of the research done to test the treatment. The best studies are controlled, blinded and randomized, where one group of subjects is given a placebo (sugar pill) and is subject-



There are many preventative medicines, including Scopolamine patches and ginger root, to keep you from feeling the woes of motion sickness.

the skin provides a steady dose for several days. Scopolamine can cause disorientation and hallucinations if given in high doses. Antihistamines also have been shown in randomized clinical trials to be effective against motion sickness. Common antihistamines for motion sickness are Dramamine and Antivert. Antihistamines cause drowsiness and should not be taken before driving a car. Ephedrine also inhibits motion sickness, but is not as potent as Scopolamine or antihistamines. Ginger may have some value, but shows only weak effects in clinical trials, and sea bands were tested in controlled trials and found to have no effect on motion sickness.

Recommendations: Learn the behaviors that reduce motion sickness, use an antihistamine or a Scopolamine patch for prophylaxis. 🐟

You can find out more on diving medicine at www.scubamed.com.

Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving today.

1980

The Magnum Blizzard

It wasn't exactly the latest Dairy Queen rage. Instead, it was a recent improvement by the folks at Sherwood—an all-season, anti-freeze regulator. And *Skin Diver* contributor John Walsh reported from the reg's testing laboratory in Green Lake, WI. The deepest all-season recreational lake in the cheese state, Green Lake offered reg testers 237 feet of icy cold water. Among other improvements to the then-current anti-freeze regs, Sherwood added a heat exchanger free of power sources like batteries or moving parts to prevent freeze-up. Believing that "simplicity is key to reliability," the warmth of a divers' breath would be enough to keep the reg working properly. The theory tested well except during hyperventilation. No problem, just keep your breathing rate normal in subzero water, and you'll be fine. 🐟



1970

Diver? Then, It's a Girl!

As reported in the May 1970 *Skin Diver* in the News Briefs section, a recent study was backing up the myth that divers are fathers to more daughters than they are to sons. "A full-scale study of the phenomena" began, and Navy and civilian divers were asked the number and sex of their children and what sort of diving they were doing around the time of conception. According to one commander, "The wives of divers working under him in the Mediterranean for a two-year period all had [baby girls] except for one." The brief went on to say that the University of Iowa had performed a study where a link between parental stress and anxiety and sex of children was discovered: "...with stressed fathers producing girls and unstressed fathers producing sons."

So if you want a boy, divvy up the Prozac and try to stay dry. 🐟



1965

The World's First Submersible Seaplane

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a...fish? In a time when the Soviets were reigning over the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas, the U.S. Navy was quickly working to recoup its authority over these areas. In November 1965, David Jacobson reported on the Navy's "secret" means to successfully regain the seas—the world's first submersible seaplane. "Fifty miles from where it went down...[it] surfaced...two engines came to life with an explosive roar...[and it] was airborne again." Jacobson wrote during a pre-launching preview of the Sub-Plane. The seaplane would double as an aircraft and submarine, approaching a target area from above, then diving beneath to seize its prey. But the laws of nature proved the seaplane to be less of a super-plane than planned. Today, the Navy does not use a submersible seaplane (at least that we know of). 🐟



SATURDAY BROKE AS ONE OF THOSE CLOUDLESS, BLUE SKY, SUMMER MORNINGS ON THE TROPICAL ISLAND OF Okinawa, Japan. My dive buddy and his girlfriend, both recently certified as open water divers, wanted to go diving as a trio. Despite a certification dating back 20 years, I'd rarely dived before my assignment to Okinawa. My buddy and I, both U.S. Marine Corps officers, wanted to enjoy the underwater scene as much as possible during our brief one-year tours. We had dived a couple times together previously and had a good rapport.

This weekend we decided to explore a dive site that was more distant from our base than usual, because it promised a good variety of undersea creatures. It was also fairly shallow, which appealed to his girlfriend. His habits of diving too deep, going too fast and leaving her behind weren't going to cut it. Since she hadn't dived with either of us before, I assured her

descended into the crystal clear waters. The area was replete with sea urchins, sea anemones and what seemed like millions of colorful fish. The depth was less than 30 feet, making it an easy, relaxed adventure. My buddy let us lag behind as he scouted ahead, then returned to hurry us forward to explore the countless undersea archways, amazing overhangs and even a small cavern.

He motioned for us to follow him in as he hovered just inside the gaping opening. Our flashlight beams seemed to be completely absorbed by

ized that the tide had been going out when we'd entered the water and was now very low. With only a foot between the rocky volcanic bottom and the water's surface, we were facing a stroll over uneven surfaces of more than 200 feet. And, after a long dive, it looked like a mile. At least the water was clear, I consoled myself, as I noted the many gaping openings we would have to avoid.

After a few minutes of trying to totter along with our gear on (minus fins), we finally gave up. We inflated the BCs, loaded them with our gear, and pulled them behind us like rafts. The blazing sun turned our task into a tortuous walk through the

The Long Walk

the gloom within a few feet, and I couldn't locate an interior wall beyond the entrance. His girlfriend and I looked at each other, shook our heads firmly at his entreaties and moved on. Thankfully, he conceded defeat, and

we spent the remainder of our dive exploring the open areas, following a few sea snakes and watching a very territorial clownfish nip my diving glove when I crowded him.

Finally, as we were getting low on air, we headed back to our entry/exit point. When we hit shallow water, we surfaced and looked toward shore. Imagine our surprise when we real-

maze-like waters. We peeled our wetsuits down to our waists, just to vent some of the heat. It took nearly half an hour of exploring, backtracking and cautious sidestepping—not to mention slipping into holes, smacking our legs and ankles into the hard rocks, and plenty of cursing—before we made it to shore. We were drenched in sweat, breathing hard and parched. Gulping water from our cooler, pouring it onto our bodies and fan-

- Time your dives according to the tide.
- Plan ahead for contingencies.

ning ourselves as we sat in the shade, we slowly recovered. We couldn't believe how much difference the tide could make. 

—MAJOR STEVE PARKER, USMC



that I'd stay with her so we could poke along and view the sea life at a leisurely pace.

We strolled down into the warm water and headed out to enjoy the dive. It seemed shallower than I expected, but we had neglected to check the tide tables, so I chalked it up to low tide. After snorkeling out a couple hundred feet, we performed a surface equipment check and

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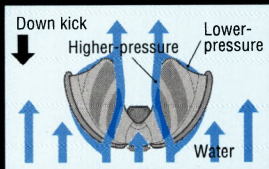


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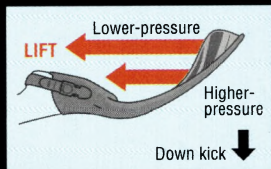
performance chart >>>

technical specs

Traditional fins only use repulsive force to create propulsion. This normally means that in order to create strong propulsion, maximum effort is required, resulting in muscle fatigue not only for beginners, women, and middle-aged divers, but professionals as well. Added to which, the body moves left and right in reaction to the kicking needed to move forward, thus reducing propulsion.



The SF-8 has a blade that is split down the middle, so it takes the shape shown in the diagram when kicked under water. This special blade shape creates propulsion (lift) by generating a pressure differential above and below the blade, in addition to the repulsive force created by kicking. The SF-8 is a fin that allows all divers to create propulsion using only a small bent-knee kick, with a light rhythm.



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